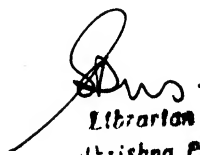


An
Elementary Course of
Ethics

1900


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PREFACE.

IN preparing a second edition of this *Elementary Course of Ethics* we have subjected the whole book to a thorough and careful revision, while adhering almost without change to the arrangement and plan of the former edition. The chapters on the Moral Consciousness and the Moral Standard have to a great extent been recast and rewritten. The theory of Obligation has been carried a little further than by Martineau, and its basis shown to be the love of God. The chapter on the Relation of the Individual to Society has been considerably expanded. These are the most considerable changes, but no chapter remains without some alteration.

We do not make any apology for being frankly religious in our treatment of ethics. It is often thought that if ethics is a science it must keep aloof from religion and religious expressions. The name of God seems to some minds to be the watchword of all that is unscientific and unreasonable. But if morality finds its practical inspiration in religion, and if, as we believe, the power to be moral comes from the grace of God; then, however unscientific certain forms of holding these truths may be, it seems evident that as a science ethics cannot refrain from giving these facts an importance in theory,

correlative to their importance in the field of practice. This seems to us the least that can be said.

One other matter needs a word or two. It is often said that the theory of Personality as standard and end may be all very well for philosophers and thinkers familiar with abstractions, but is far too vague and indefinite to be of the smallest practical utility to the ordinary man. We believe this to be very far from the truth. One's own personality is the one thing in the world of which absolutely first-hand and authentic knowledge may be obtained. To obtain this knowledge, an act of introspection is, however, necessary. If this be ill done or not done at all, the standard and end constituted by the human personality will indeed seem vague and indefinite. But the command 'know thyself' applies to moral practice no less than to ethical theory, and the effort of introspection demanded is reasonably and rightly demanded. We hardly think, besides, that 'the ordinary man' can be very much neglected or overlooked in a theory which derives itself from Aristotle.

CALA UTTA, *January, 1900*

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE present volume is not intended to be in any sense an original contribution to the literature of ethics. In writing the following pages we have had before us no such ambitious aim. A consideration of the ethical syllabus laid down by the Calcutta University for the B.A. Examination led us to put together a few notes for use in the lecture-room, seeing that no one existing text-book of ethics covers exactly the course which the University requires. When this had been done it was suggested that if these notes were worked up and slightly elaborated, they might prove to be of some use to others confronted similarly by the difficulty of interpreting a comprehensive and somewhat laconic syllabus. The present volume is the outcome of that suggestion, and is not meant to be anything more than an attempt to supply a basis for lectures to the B.A. classes of this University.

At the same time we have endeavoured to present to the reader a sketch of a coherent and consistent ethical doctrine, and to make this sketch as complete as possible. We have, therefore, in certain portions slightly transcended the limits of the University syllabus, and in particular have added a chapter on the metaphysic of ethics which the syllabus does not include, but which nevertheless seemed necessary to the coherence of the view maintained in the preceding chapters.

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Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens above and the moral law within*. I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connexion therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connexion, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an *intelligence* by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent on animality and even on the whole sensible world—at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite.—*Kant*.

AN ELEMENTARY COURSE OF ETHICS.

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND SCOPE OF ETHICAL STUDIES.

§ 1. *Fundamental Ethical Ideas.*

ETHICS starts from the broad fact that all men as men have an irresistible tendency to approve or disapprove the actions of themselves and of their fellowmen, to call certain actions *right* and others actions *wrong*, to give honour and attribute merit to those who do right, and to impute dishonour and attribute demerit to those who do wrong. The idea of right.

Closely connected with this way of viewing actions as right and wrong, and involved in it, are two other ideas which lie at the root of ethics. To say that an action is right implies a belief that the action *ought* to be done; the two ideas mutually imply each other and are inseparable. Thus, the idea of right leads on to the idea of duty, to the belief that it is our duty to do what is right and to abstain from doing what is wrong; and if men are asked why they are under an obligation to do what is right, they will commonly answer that there is a law or rule of duty which they must obey. The idea of duty.

The idea of
good.

If we further go on to ask why the law of duty must be obeyed we shall be led to the third root-idea of ethics. A thoughtful man would say that human life and human actions must have, and ought to have, some object; that there is a *good* for man which all men should aim at; that the rule of duty ought to be obeyed because presumably this rule of duty will guide us to the end and object of our life, to the good of man's being; and that the attitude of the individual towards this end of life is one of obligation or duty to realise it.

These three
ideas insepar-
able

But though we speak thus of the idea of right, the idea of duty, and the idea of good, we must carefully observe that they are not separate ideas corresponding to separate facts, but three constituents of one idea, three sides of the same thing, three aspects of the same fact. Any one of them always presupposes the other two, and in reality they are inseparable, each containing the others potentially, each involving and implying the whole idea of which it is one aspect. But inasmuch as they indicate three different points of view from which the fundamental ethical idea may be contemplated, their use separately for purposes of analysis is legitimate and in no way misleading.

It is evident that no assumption need be made as to the chronological priority of any one or other of these ideas. Different aspects of the same thing may very possibly emerge separately and in varied order into consciousness. But for our purpose no assumption or investigation regarding the order in which these three notions present themselves to consciousness, or regarding any possible order of derivation, is required. It is enough to perceive that if one be given the others

Right duty, good are then the three constituents which together make up the fundamental ethical idea. The distinctions of right and wrong are thus called moral distinctions. The judgment that an action is right or wrong is called a moral judgment. The feelings that arise in our minds in connection with moral judgments are called moral sentiments, such feelings, for instance, as those of obligation to do what is right, of self-respect and inward peace when right has been done, of shame and remorse when the law of duty has been neglected or broken, of respect for or disapproval of others, according as we judge them to have acted rightly or wrongly.

Resulting ethical principles

§ 2 Conduct and Character

Moral distinctions, that is the terms right and wrong, are applied to human actions, but not to all human actions. Some human actions are merely mechanical or reflex organic movements, and to these moral distinctions do not apply. Nor, again, can we apply the terms right and wrong to an act regarded in the abstract, without reference to the acts which preceded it, the motives which prompted it, and, some would say, the effects which follow it. Acts performed under compulsion and involuntary acts cannot be spoken of as right and wrong; and we are not in a position to pass a moral judgment upon an action until we can affirm that it was the result of an act of choice, and are able to appreciate the circumstances under which the choice was made. Without these we have not the data for a moral judgment. It is, in short, the conscious purpose shown in an act which makes us call it right or wrong; it is the choice made of ends and means which we praise or condemn in an act.

Moral distinctions not applicable to all human actions

not only to such as are conscious, purposive,

i.e., to character
or to conduct
defined as the
expression
of character.

Now choice is an act of the will. But it is self-evident that the work of the will at any given moment must be largely influenced by its previous acts, which is the same thing as saying that each choice a man makes forms one of a continuous and connected series of acts of choice, continuous inasmuch as each is conditioned by its predecessors.

Now, if we consider the whole series of a man's acts of choice taken together, we observe that they form, and in turn result from, a certain bent or trend of the will; we observe, in other words, that the will in its choice of activities acquires a certain tendency. And inasmuch as the will is no mere isolated faculty, but is a man's self in action, we speak of this bent or tendency of the will as constituting a certain type of character. We may then define character as that tendency or habit of will which manifests itself in a man's consciously purposive acts taken all together. It is important, however, to remember that though the course of a man's life exhibits this tendency towards a settled habit of will, "absolute fixity of character is disproved by that indubitable fact of moral experience which Plato, equally with the Christian theologian, calls 'conversion'—such a complete change of bent as amounts not merely to a reformation but to a revolution of character. . . . The man is always more than the sum of his past and present experience, and often he surprises us by creating a future which, while it stands in relation to the past, yet does so only or chiefly by antithesis."¹ This consideration should effectually preclude us from adopting a mechanical view of the growth of character; but it does not prevent us from recognizing that at any given time in a man's life he exhibits a certain tendency of will,

which we also call a type of character. The expression of character in action, i.e., the actions in which this tendency of will is manifested, we call conduct. It is to conduct understood in this sense that the distinctions of right and wrong are applied. This is the same thing as saying that it is a man's character on which we pass moral judgments of approval or disapproval, for without conduct character would be invisible and unknowable, and except as the expression of character, conduct would be unmeaning and unappreciable.

Some writers, such as Mr. Herbert Spencer, use the term conduct to cover every kind of action, including under the term mechanical and reflex movements, as well as consciously purposive actions. If we use the term conduct in this sense we must say that the distinctions of right and wrong can only be applied to that part of conduct which is expressive of character.

Mr. Spencer's
definition of
conduct.

§ 3. *Conduct as Moral Life.*

* Mr. Spencer's view of conduct is interesting because it points to the fact that conduct, regarded as moral life, is capable of growth. In the history of the life of every individual human being there can be traced a progress from the elementary life of instinct to the complex activity of a self-conscious personality, and it is only by slow and gradual development that a man comes to realise the implications of his personal life, and to learn that he is a person holding relations of duty with other persons, and living in vital union with other and kindred personalities. There is a development of moral life, as the life of purposeless and instinctive activity develops into the consciously purposive activity which we have called conduct; and there is a development of moral life, as conduct becomes more and more animated by the idea

Growth of
conduct of
moral life.

that man has to support the dignity and duties of a personal life. Now, just as we have limited the term 'conduct' to a connected series of consciously purposive actions, so we might limit the application of the term 'moral conduct' to the connected series of purposive actions which are animated by the central idea that man is a personal being and bound by the law of personal life. From this point of view the life of a man would be a moral life in proportion as it was animated by and fulfilled the requirements of this idea, and this definition of moral conduct would strictly apply only to conduct which is perfectly moral. It seems, however, preferable to use the terms 'conduct' and 'moral conduct' as co-extensive. Life begins to be moral, and therefore to be called conduct, at a much lower level than that at which it would be perfectly moral; in other words, conduct, or what is for us the same, moral conduct, begins as soon as the notion of the personal self initiates control over our actions, and makes them consciously purposive.

Double meaning
of the term
'moral' and
'morality.'

§ 4. *Use of the terms 'Moral' and 'Morality.'*

From what has just been said it will appear that just as the term 'conduct' may have a double meaning, so too the terms 'moral' and 'morality' are susceptible of a twofold usage. The term 'moral' may be applied generally to that department of life which furnishes data for judgments regarding right and wrong; but it is sometimes used to denote exclusively that section of such data which furnishes material for judgments of approbation. Thus when we speak of a moral life, we may mean either a life which can be judged by standards of right and wrong, as, for instance, the life of man in antithesis to the life of brutes, or we may mean a life which observes and obeys the rules of right conduct. In

the former case its antithesis is 'unmoral' or 'non-moral,' in the latter case 'immoral.'¹ The term 'morality' is used in a precisely similar way.

§ 5. *The Faith underlying the Growth of Moral Life.*

Most men come at some time or another to reflect upon their life. Reflection in this sense is by no means the prerogative of philosophers. And their reflections naturally tend to assume the form of a question or of many questions. What is the meaning of my life? What are my real relations to my fellowmen? Is life worth living? The answers to these questions embody the faith which underlies the growth of moral conduct. In all these cases, however much men may theorise on the emptiness or aimlessness of life, the mere fact of living and of performing any of the functions—physical or moral—of life, is a sufficient proof that the consciousness of mankind does hold the faith that life is worth living, that man has duties towards other beings, that man's personality is worth something, and that there is a purpose and a meaning in life. We might almost say that such questions could not arise were there not in man a consciousness that they can be answered. A man cannot get rid of this belief. He may try to forget it, but the belief itself only perishes with his life, and so far as any man attempts to reflect on his life and to regulate it, he does so in this belief. To an ordinary man the idea that he is a person with duties to other persons, and with a purpose to fulfil, may not be at all clear, and he may not realise that he has this faith in his destiny as a personal being. Nevertheless the idea and the faith are there, silently guiding the man's life. The necessity of this faith does not

Reflection on life gives rise to certain questions,

the answer to which involves the belief which underlies the growth of moral life.

The necessity of such a faith

¹ See Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 53.

depend upon the fact that every one is aware of holding it, but upon the fact that without it there would be no possibility of moral experience at all.'

§ 6. *Definition of Ethics.*

Ethics defined.

We are now in a position to see what the business of ethics is. Ethics is the theory of human character, or of human conduct as expressive of character. Its business is to discover and to elucidate the nature, the duties, and the purpose of personal existence, and so to convert the blind unthinking faith which underlies all moral conduct and all moral life into rational insight.

Its procedure.

It will thus be necessary for ethics to start with an examination of the data furnished for this purpose by psychology. But upon the basis of this examination it will institute an enquiry into the ultimate meaning of the facts furnished by psychology, and will seek to discover what they tell us of the central principle of man's moral and spiritual life. And inasmuch as a science is defined by its ultimate end, we may further define ethics as an enquiry into the central principle of man's moral and spiritual life.

Thus the business of ethics is at first psychological, and concerns itself with questions as to

- * 1. The nature of the feelings and emotions and springs of action :
- * 2. The nature of desire and will
3. The nature of the moral sentiments and the moral faculty.

But, these preliminaries concluded, ethics proceeds to

* As to the meaning of the 'necessity' of an idea, see Green's *Principles of Ethics*, p. 18.

an enquiry, both scientific and philosophical, which involves,

1. An investigation into the distinction of right and wrong applied to human conduct and human character, according as the man does or does not conform to moral law. It seeks to determine what it is which is called right or wrong; what is the essential nature of rightness; and what are the tests by which it may be recognised and known—(Right).

2. An investigation into the nature of the moral law by which human conduct is regulated in aiming at the good, and into the obligation which lies upon men to obey the moral law—(Duty)

3. An investigation of the final end or purpose of human life—(the Good).

Lastly, ethics seeks to answer certain fundamental metaphysical questions which have arisen during the previous enquiry, questions as to

1. The freedom of the will.
2. The relation of man to nature.
3. The relation of man to God.

§ 7. *Is Ethics a Science or a Philosophy?*

A science consists in the examination, comparison, What a science is. and classification of a certain set of phenomena which are its data, and it seeks by induction to establish general laws based upon these data, and from these general laws to deduce special laws which shall apply to particular cases. It observes phenomena, it classifies them, and lastly seeks to explain them as phenomena.

If ethics is a science it will first of all examine the nature, meaning, and validity of moral judgments, of conscience, of duty, and the like. What ethics should be as a science. Then it will compare and classify moral distinctions and conceptions, and

lastly, it will attempt by induction to reach general conclusions from which particular conclusions may be deduced to explain particular phenomena

View that ethics is not a science, because of (1) its inexactitude, (2) its ideal aim.

Now, some would say that ethics is less than a science thus described. That, in the first place, a science deals with what is, with facts, whereas ethics deals with what men think ought to be, with ideals. That, in the second place, ethics does not reach that exact and accurate knowledge which is the aim of science, and that it should therefore be called a study rather than a science.

Ethics is a science and more than a science (a) It is an inexact science like biology and psychology

But it may more rightly be maintained that ethics is a science, and more than a science. Among sciences, there is a distinction between exact sciences and inexact sciences, based upon the difference in the subject-matter of the various sciences, and Aristotle rightly insisted that we should not demand a greater scientific exactitude than the nature of the subject-matter permits. Life and thought and feeling are not susceptible of the accurate physical measurements which can be applied to space and time, matter and motion; but just as biology and psychology are admitted to be inexact sciences, so too ethics must be admitted to be an inexact science, and in the same sense. And further, though ethics deals with ideals, yet the ideals with which it deals, and the results to which they give rise, are just as much facts of human life as are the data of any of the physical sciences. The antithesis between facts and ideals, when applied to discountenance the claims of the latter to serious consideration, is entirely misleading. For ideals, when viewed as facts of human life, are capable of being classified and analysed and explained in an orderly and systematic fashion; and this is the same thing as saying that they may legitimately form the subject-matter of a science.

But because ethics deals with ideals which ought to be, because it seeks to authoritatively regulate human life, in the light of its ideals, it is, or should be, much more than a science. Human duty can only be established upon a knowledge of the realities of human existence, or at least a reasonable belief as to these realities. It may be that the nature of spiritual life is unknowable, and that the search of ethics for the central principle of moral or spiritual life is doomed to failure. So, too, the search of biology for the central principle of physical life may be a search after the unknowable. But at any rate the task must be attempted till it is proved to be impossible, and ethics cannot stop short of a philosophy which shall supplement and widen the narrower scientific task which has preceded it.

(b) Its ideal aim transcends science and ends in philosophy.

§. 8. *Philosophy and the Special Sciences.*

Not only then does ethics advance into philosophy but the philosophic point of view must necessarily reach beyond the more limited scope of the preceding scientific task. The special sciences all deal with data which are full of obscurity and contradiction, but the purposes of a special science being limited, these defects may be overlooked inasmuch as they do not complicate the particular problem in hand. "A geologist's purposes fall short of understanding Time itself. A mechanist need not know how action and reaction are possible at all. A psychologist has enough to do without asking how both he and the mind which he studies are able to take cognisance of the same outer world. But it is obvious that problems irrelevant from one standpoint may be essential from another."¹ Taking

¹ W. James: *Text-book of Psychology*, pp. 461, 462.

psychology¹ as an example, the psychologist does not for his purposes need to solve the question of the freedom of the will, or the problem of the relation of the mind to the external world; but when the psychologist's task is done, these questions which have arisen in the course of his investigation are handed on to the philosopher for solution. The case of ethics is somewhat different. Its subject-matter demands the treatment of philosophy, and the psychological data from which it takes its start are not done with until they are carried up into and interpreted by the metaphysical question in which ethics finds its goal.

§ 9. *Ethics and Psychology.*

Ethics, as we have seen, starts from data furnished by psychology. Its first duty is to examine the nature, the meaning, and the validity of moral judgment, of conscience, of the moral sentiments, of the feelings of obligation; and these questions are purely psychological. Ethics, however, will differ from psychology in its treatment of these data. Psychology is interested in these data simply as facts, as phenomenal manifestations of mind, and only aims at giving a methodical account of these mental phenomena as it does of all other mental phenomena. But ethics is interested in these data as indicating an ideal of human life, and to reach sight of this ideal it has to investigate the essential nature and meaning of these mental phenomena. Thus ethics passes beyond scientific psychology and becomes a

¹ We accept here the current use of the term 'psychology,' which restricts it to a more or less empirical psychology. Whether this divorce between psychology and metaphysics is justifiable, or even practicable, is a question which we need not raise here.

philosophy. For example, psychology is merely concerned with the feelings of right and wrong and moral obligations as feelings in our minds, i.e. as mere subjective phenomena; ethics goes beyond this to discover whether these feelings are merely subjective feelings, or whether they correspond and answer to objective realities.

§ 10. *Ethics and Sociology.*

The relation of ethics to sociology is similar to its relation to psychology. The history of the progress of society, the history of moral ideas and institutions, will furnish important data for ethics, but ethics will differ from sociology in its treatment of these data, for it aims at something higher than the mere observation and classification of the phenomena of society. Thus, for instance, in considering the institution of slavery, sociology will treat the question historically and economically; it will seek to ascertain the causes which originated slavery, the history of the institution itself, and its economic and social results. Ethics, on the other hand, will endeavour to determine the relation of slavery to the facts of man's moral nature, and will either justify or condemn it according as it is or is not found to harmonise with the rights and implications of human personality as such. And in the second place, passing thus beyond social phenomena considered merely as historical facts, ethics will attempt to determine their object and meaning, and to discover the ideal aim towards which human society is advancing. Thus from the data afforded by the historical and economic consideration of the institution of slavery, ethics will seek to discover certain truths regarding the moral nature of man, to elucidate the significance of slavery as a fact in

the spiritual history of mankind, and to draw inferences from the history of the institution as to the spiritual progress of human society.

§ 11 *Ethics and Metaphysics.*

Ethics begins in psychology and sociology, it ends in metaphysics and religion. At the outset it is a science, engaged in examining the moral phenomena furnished to it by psychology and sociology, and in attempting to reduce these moral phenomena to an uniformity. But being, as we have seen, more than merely a science, it cannot rest content with the attempt to answer the question 'what are the facts of morality?' but must by its very nature pass on to the metaphysical question, 'what is the ultimate meaning of these facts?' To this question no adequate answer can be given so long as we separate morality either from nature or from God. Reality is one, though its elements are three, and no one of them can be understood in any degree by the human mind except in so far as it is viewed in its mutual relation to the others. Moral facts cannot be understood in abstraction from the great realities which lie beyond them. Thus the concluding investigations of ethics are metaphysical. They will, however, be something different from a mere branch of metaphysics. The aim of ethical investigation differs from the more speculative aims of metaphysics in placing before itself the entirely practical object of the regulation of human life. Beginning as a science, ethics ends its investigations in philosophy, but its final object is not gained till it has pointed its investigation in a practical application to human life.

§ 12. *Ethics and Religion*

If ethics terminates in metaphysics, it must terminate in theology. Metaphysics is essentially and inevitably theological. No transcendental enquiry into the origin and end of things can stop short of religious conclusions, and, similarly, no account of man can be adequate which does not explain his relation to God,—the highest of all realities and the ultimate source of all reality. Without religion no satisfactory answer can be given to the questions raised by moral obligation, 'why ought I to do what is right?' and to whom is this obligation due? Thus if an explanation of the most fundamental characteristic of the moral consciousness is to be arrived at, it is necessary to complete ethics in religion.

This does not, however, mean that morality and religion are necessarily concomitant and inter dependent. There are forms of religion which seem to have little or no connection with morality, and there are many men who live good lives, and aim at high ideals of conduct, who yet profess to have no knowledge of, or belief in, God, or who at any rate do not connect their morality with any religion. But this does not alter the fact that conscience should lead men to God, and that ethics should end in religion. Such cases as we have referred to are cases of arrested and stunted development. The fact remains that ethics on the one hand remains incomplete, inadequate, and unexplained, unless it can carry itself up into religion; while, on the other hand, no religion can be truly a religion unless God speaks in it to the conscience of man.

§ 13. *Ethics and Politics.*

We may distinguish ethics from politics by saying that while ethics concerns itself with what ought to be

in human affairs so far as this depends upon the voluntary action of individuals, politics is the theory of what ought to be in human affairs so far as this depends upon the common action of societies of men. If we subdivide politics into (1) the theory of the function of Government, and (2) the theory of the constitution of Government, including the relation that ought to exist between the Government and its subjects, it will be seen that ethics is connected chiefly with the first branch of politics.

It is evident that as regards the former enquiry, ethics and politics are guided by precisely the same fundamental ideas. Man, as Aristotle has said, is essentially "a political animal," and the law of the individual life is also the law of the social life. "The object of the political association is not merely a common life but noble action,"¹ and the end of a state, no less than the aim of the individual, is "living well." In this department, therefore, the root conceptions of ethics and politics are identical, for it is impossible that "right" should mean one thing for the individual man, and another thing altogether for societies of men. Whether ethically or politically considered, the notions of equity and justice and noble action mean precisely the same thing. But it is also true to say that ethics is on the whole prior to politics and independent of it. It is the individual consciousness of right which sets up the social ideal, and the laws of human society are laws springing from the personal nature and requirements of each social unit. It is true that the growth of the individual ideal is only possible under social conditions, but the former is the vital principle, the latter the occasion and cause of its growth.

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, iii. 2.

Ethics will, however, differ from politics in its treatment of the individual life. It is the business of ethics first to determine what it is, right for each individual person to do, and then, when this is settled, the politician has further to determine how far he can enforce the performance of right action by legal penalties, or encourage right action by public rewards. But the demands of ethical theory are far deeper and wider than the demands of political theory, for, in the first place, a very large number of right actions cannot be enforced at all, and in the second place, law or politics can only deal with the outward actions of men, and can but seldom concern itself with the inner character which is the special field of ethics.

§ 14. *Moral Theory and Practice.*

Life or practice always precedes its theory or explanation, and thus moral life and practice, or the practice of morality, precedes moral theory or the explanation of morality.

At first morality is a matter of instinct, of tradition, of authority. The conceptions of good, of right, and of duty, which guide the mass of mankind, are largely accepted in blind faith. There is indeed in the life of every man a stage, more or less well defined, of obedience to authority, and it is more than probable that it is from this source we must trace the development of the consciousness of a social order governed by certain laws of right and wrong, and moving towards a certain end. Such a development is a result of gradual analysis, and is one instance of the general truth that a time comes when men are forced to scrutinise the conceptions which they have, till that time, taken on trust. The common rules of right, of good, and of duty, are

found to vary and conflict with one another, and often with common sense. Hence there arises a demand for a theory which shall explain the life that man is living, and reduce it to a coherent system.

On the other hand, all practice implies theory, and so too all moral life implies moral theory. There is no life which is altogether without some plan, some conception, however vague and ill-defined, of what life means. Every action implies some view of life as a whole possessing some meaning for the man, and no man seriously chooses a new action without referring it to its place in his plan of life. Such a plan of life is already a theory.

But if we cannot separate practice from theory, it is equally impossible to separate theory from practice. The interest of the moral philosopher is practical as well as theoretical, he wishes to know what is right, what is good, what is his duty, in order that he may regulate his conduct thereby. And the result of larger knowledge is, as a rule, better conduct. There is much truth in the Socratic aphorism that "Virtue is knowledge." Folly and sin, wisdom and goodness, are to a great extent synonymous, and a larger and deeper conception of the meaning of life is almost certain to produce a deeper and better life. Thus moral theory, arising from the need of some explanation of moral practice, has also the aim of elevating the actual practice which created the need from which it springs.

CHAPTER II.

METHODS OF ETHICS.

§ 15. *What is a Method of Ethics?*

ACCORDING to Professor Sidgwick, a method of ethics is "any rational procedure by which we determine what it is right for individual human beings to do, or to seek to realise by voluntary action"¹ Starting from this definition, Dr. Sidgwick divides ethical methods into two great classes:—

Dr Sidgwick account of methods of Ethics.

1. The method of those who hold that the correct ethical method consists in an investigation of the true moral laws or the rational rules of conduct.

2. The method of those who maintain that the correct method consists in an enquiry into the nature of the *summum bonum* or the ultimate end of human life.

This latter class again falls into two subdivisions:—

(a) The end of human life is by some defined as happiness: either (i) one's own happiness, or (ii) the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

(b) Others maintain that the aim of human life is perfection.

While accepting Dr. Sidgwick's definition of a method of ethics, we include within its scope rather more, perhaps,

This account criticised.

¹ Sidgwick: *Methods of Ethics*, p. 1.

than its author intends. A method of ethics involve metaphysical as well as scientific investigations and includes the three great topics of right, duty, and good studied not merely in their phenomenal manifestation in human conduct, but with regard to their ultimate meaning and their foundation in the nature of man. In determining by rational procedure what it is right for human beings to seek to realise by voluntary action, we necessarily pass from practical and concrete considerations to the ideal principles to which every individual act must be related by such rational procedure. Thus a method of ethics may be analysed into two parts: first, the *analysis* of moral phenomena; and then their *explanation*. From these two follows the conclusion or *concrete determination* which the method started to discover. It is evident that the difference between various methods will be most apparent in the attempt made by them respectively to *explain* the phenomena of moral life, and it is therefore most convenient to classify methods of ethics on this principle.

§ 16. *Imperfect Methods of Ethics.*

The following imperfect methods have been proposed for the purpose of investigating ethical problems:—

The physical and biological method.

1. The physical and biological method of Mr. Herbert Spencer and the evolutionary school in general, who attempt to explain moral life by means of mechanical and biological conceptions, understanding conduct to be merely a complex series of movements which are to be treated under purely physical conceptions.

This view entirely ignores a fact universally credited by human consciousness, the fact, namely, that man is free and that his conduct is directed by a sense of duty and a sense of the value of life. There is, moreover, only a

fanciful analogy between human conduct and mechanical and animal movements, for in the view of ethics the complex series of outward movements is merely the index and expression of the character within.

2. Other followers of the evolutionary school, as for example, Mr. Leslie Stephen, maintain that the true method of ethics is historical. ^{The historical method.} To understand any phenomenon, they say, is to know its origin, and therefore to understand human conduct in the present we must go back to the earliest morality of which we have any record, and trace from it the development of our present morality in progressive stages. Ethics is on this view of it regarded as a branch of anthropology.

This method ignores the fact that ethics aims at something higher than merely ascertaining and classifying moral phenomena, and that its business is to investigate the meaning and essential nature of these phenomena. No method which is merely historical can avail for an investigation of this nature. The historical method is also open to the objection that it proceeds upon a false notion of development. Development must be read backward and not forward, and we must find the key to the meaning of the first stage in the last. It is the developed organism that explains the germ from which it grew. No examination of the embryo can reveal to us the lineaments of the plant or animal or man, although it is true that a study of origins may throw light upon the last stage of a development when we work back from the latter to the former. Thus the progress of the human race is not to be explained by a consideration of the point from which it started, but rather by primarily considering the goal to which it is advancing, and it is in the later rather than in the earlier forms of morality that we are to seek for the interpretation of human life as a whole.

The psychological method.

3. Others maintain that the method of ethics is properly psychological. The leading facts of ethics, they say, are facts of consciousness, and we must not seek to travel beyond these facts. The business of the moral philosopher, according to this view, is to classify men's motives, and to analyse their volitions and moral consciousness. On this view ethics is regarded as a branch of psychology.

Now there is no doubt that much the largest and most important portion of ethical data is furnished by psychological investigations, and that no ethical theory can stand on a firm base which does not start with the examination of these psychological phenomena. But while psychology is a science, ethics, as we have shown, is more than a science. It is a philosophy, and its business is not only with moral phenomena but with the meaning of these phenomena, that is to say, with the reality which underlies them. Psychology with its methods may give us an account of what the phenomena of moral consciousness are as phenomena. It remains for ethical philosophy to explain these phenomena, to develop from them what they imply as to human nature and its relations with other natures and other beings, and thus to construct upon them a philosophy which shall explain, or endeavour to explain, the life of man as a moral life.

The *a priori* method.

4. Others again maintain that the right method of ethics is the abstract and *a priori* method. We should start, they say, with certain abstract definitions of good, of will, of freedom, of God, and so on, and from these we should seek to deduce particular rules for human conduct.

This view reduces ethics to a barren and abstract theory. The *a priori* method leads to no result in

ethical philosophy, any more than in physical science. Whatever be the study on which we are engaged, it is always equally necessary for us to start with the lessons of experience, and we gain knowledge only by unprejudiced study of facts.

§ 17. *The Philosophical Method of Ethics.*

These criticisms have paved the way for the assertion that the proper method of ethics is philosophical. The philosophical method, avoids on the one hand the errors of purely scientific methods which blindly restrict themselves to the verification and classification of ethical phenomena, and it also avoids on the other hand the errors of the *a priori* method which hastily neglects facts to indulge in abstract and inadequate speculation. It starts with a careful examination of the ethical data supplied by psychology and sociology, using for the purposes of this examination the scientific method proper to these data. But it does not stop here, in all its observation and examination of the facts of moral life ethics is inspired by a metaphysical speculation which goes beyond the facts. It is ever seeking to penetrate to the deep realities which underlie moral phenomena, which in fact give them their meaning as moral, and fill them with the significance which compels man to construct a moral philosophy.

The application of this method to ethics results thus in claiming for ethics a twofold task. In the first place, there is the narrower task of science. Ethics begins with psychology, and in particular with a psychological investigation into the nature of the distinctions of right and wrong as applied to human conduct. And it is most important that this task should be well done, for inadequacies in ethical theory may generally be traced to

The philosophical method.

It implies a twofold task for ethics.

inadequate psychology underlying the theory. But to ethics also belongs the wider task of philosophy, the task of relating the facts of human life to the great realities which surround them, and no interpretation of human life can be regarded as adequate which does not place man in his true relations in the order of the Universe.

The philosophical method vindicated against the agnostic objection to metaphysics.

The application of a philosophical method to ethics is, however, by certain writers objected to on agnostic grounds. There is, these writers maintain, no such thing as a luminous and rational metaphysic. We know nothing whatever about a transcendental world, and what we think we know is pure speculation. We should keep close to the realities of the world we see around us, the "world of experience," and not run off into useless and irrelevant speculations which cannot possibly throw any light on any fact of human life.

To prove the falsity of this view is perhaps hardly possible. The possibility or impossibility of a metaphysic is a matter which cannot, of course, be demonstrated. Its vindication is found in an appeal to the facts of human consciousness, and its proof rests not upon argument and inference but upon fact. Hence the best commendation of the philosophical method lies in the bare statement of it, and to the mind which feels the inadequacy of any mere physical science to interpret life it will carry inevitable conviction of its truth. The issue is well put by Professor James Seth: "It is never mere facts that we seek, it is always the meaning of the facts, and our accumulation of facts is never more than a means towards the attainment of that insight into their significance which makes the facts luminous. Every fact, every element of reality, carries us beyond itself for its explanation; if we would understand it, we must relate it to other facts, and these to

others, until, to understand the meanest, slightest fact or element of reality, we find that we should have to relate it to all the other facts of the Universe, and to see it as an element of universal reality The controversy between agnosticism and metaphysics is, therefore, not a controversy between realism and idealism, between science and unscientific philosophy. It is rather a controversy between a narrower and a wider view of reality, between a more superficial and a more profound interpretation of the facts. . . . In the case now in question, the metaphysician only seeks to attain a more intimate and exhaustive knowledge of moral reality than the scientific moralist, to penetrate to the deeper reality of moral phenomena, to understand what it is that thus 'appears,' to grasp the Being of moral Seeming. The scientific moralist insists on taking moral facts in abstraction from their bearing on the whole theory of the cosmos. His ambition is to discover the true system of the moral judgments; and he does not raise the question of the ultimate validity of these judgments or of their relation to other judgments, intellectual or æsthetic. But a final and adequate ethical view is not reached, a satisfactory explanation of morality is not attained, so long as we separate morality either from Nature or from God. Reality is one, and its elements must be seen in their mutual relation if they are to be understood as in reality they are. . . . Ethics is therefore finally inseparable from metaphysics, and it needs no 'ingenious sophistry' to 'force them into relation.'"¹

¹ James Seth: *A Study of Ethical Principles*, pp. 354-356.

CHAPTER III

VOLUNTARY ACTION.

§ 18. *Basis of Voluntary Movement.*

Voluntary
movements
based upon
involuntary
movements.

SINCE ethics is concerned with voluntary actions, the moral philosopher must give some account of voluntary actions and of the psychology of the Will.

Volition implies an end or purpose. To gain our end we must execute movements, but we cannot create new kinds of movements at will. We can only use such movements as we have acquired to carry out our will or purpose. "Nature helps us forward before we ourselves play a conscious part. The involuntary activity forms the basis and content of the voluntary. The will is in no way creative but only modifying and selective."¹ Voluntary movements are thus secondary and not primary functions of our organism. "We are no more endowed with prophetic vision of what movements lie in our power than we are endowed with prophetic vision of what sensation we are capable of receiving. As we must wait for the sensation to be given us, so we must wait for the movements to be performed involuntarily before we can frame ideas of what either of these things are. . . . A supply of ideas of the various

¹ H. Höffding: *Outline of Psychology*, p. 330 (Eng. tr.).

movements that are possible, left in the memory by experiences of their involuntary performance, is thus the first prerequisite of the voluntary life." ¹ What then are the primary and involuntary movements upon which voluntary movement is based?

§ 19. *Involuntary Movements.*

Involuntary movements are

These are of many kinds, namely :

1. Reflex or automatic actions, such as the beating of the heart, the closing of the eyelids. These are purely physiological, and are without any conscious accompaniment. (1) Reflex or automatic.

2. Spontaneous or random movements, such as the movement of an infant tossing its limbs about through sheer superabundance of life and energy. These movements are partly conscious and partly unconscious. (2) Spontaneous or random.

3. Sensori-motor movements, such as the movement of starting at a sudden sound. These movements are conscious but involuntary. They are the automatic response to sensation excited by external stimuli, the same response always following a given stimulus, the nerve centres being so organised that certain stimuli, as it were, pull the trigger of certain explosive parts. (3) Sensori-motor movements.

4. Instinctive movements, such as the movement of sucking in the infant. They may be described as unacquired movements, determined by congenital organic arrangements; and are by many psychologists classed as a particular variety of sensori-motor movements. They differ, however, from the sensori-motor movements in the following particulars: (4) Instinctive.

(a) They are not a mere momentary response to particular stimuli.

(b) They possess a greater complexity.

¹ W. James: *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. II, pp. 487, 488.

- (c) They have their source within the motor centres rather than in the external stimulus.
- (d) They are guided by reference to a definite end, useful either to the individual or to the race.

These result
in setting up
"kinæsthetic
ideas"

Now all these movements are or may be accompanied by sensations and feelings, and an image of these sensations and feelings which accompany any movement is, or may be, retained in the memory. Such an image has been called a "kinæsthetic idea." But such ideas are essentially impulsive. Whenever a "kinæsthetic idea" enters the mind there is a tendency to immediately carry it out. If, however, we thus surrender ourselves to an idea and immediately act upon it our action is not voluntary. Thus to the four kinds of involuntary movements already mentioned we must add:

5. Ideo-motor movements.

which give
rise to
(5) Ideo-motor
movements.

"Wherever a movement unhesitatingly and immediately follows upon the idea of it we have ideomotor actions. We are then aware of nothing between the conception and the execution. All sorts of neuromuscular processes come between, of course, but we know absolutely nothing of them. We think the act, and it is done; and that is all that introspection tells us of the matter."¹ Most of the higher actions of our life are ideomotor movements. Were we to deliberate upon each action we perform life would be well-nigh brought to standstill. As Lotze says "All the acts of our daily life happen in this wise our standing up, walking, talking, all this never demands a distinct impulse of the will but is adequately brought about by the pure flux of thought."²

¹James: *Principles of Psychology*, vol. II. p. 522.

²Lotze: *Medizinische Psychologie*, p. 292. quoted by James. *op. cit.*, vol. II. p. 523.

§ 20. *The Difference between Voluntary Activity and Involuntary Activity.*

In *ideo motor* movements the determining condition of the movement is the absence of any conflicting notion in the mind. Thus when a single idea enters the mind, it fills the mind, and the corresponding movement follows immediately. But if two ideas simultaneously enter the mind and impel the mind in different directions, movement is inhibited. A block follows which may be removed in one of two ways. Either the two ideas may be left to struggle in the mind, till one overcomes the other and produces its appropriate movement, or the conflict between the two ideas may be decided by the intervention of the will or self. The difference between voluntary and involuntary actions consists therefore in this, that in the former the self or person so far from allowing his ideas and the movements they prompt to follow one another in natural and inevitable sequence, interposes between them and exercises control over them. Through the power of self-consciousness the self is able to contemplate itself and its ideas as objects, and to pronounce upon the desirability or undesirability of certain ideas by comparing each of the impelling ideas with its conception of the meaning and purpose of life.¹

The difference between voluntary and involuntary activity consists in the intervention of the self or person.

¹ This can hardly be said to happen till considerable way has been made in the development of thought and will. But the statement in the text is designed to show the ultimate meaning of the power of volition to human life, the difference between voluntary and involuntary action at one extreme. It is also to be noticed that even the child has some plan of life, though it would hardly know it by that name. Any general idea of what one would like or dislike is a rudimentary plan of life, and its importance during childhood as a factor in the development of character can hardly be overestimated.

And through its power of choice and self-determination it is able to decide whether any idea, with its corresponding movements, shall be adopted as harmonising with and giving satisfaction to the self, or shall be rejected as unsuitable and unsatisfying to the self.¹

§ 21. *The Process of Volition.*

The process of volition exhibited in three stages.

(1) Inhibition

The process of volition may be divided into the following stages.—

(1) *Inhibition*.—The self consciously intervenes and stops all impulsive tendency for the time, so that there is a pause or interval during which activity is suspended.

(2) Deliberation

(2) *Deliberation*.—The self reflects upon various possible courses of action, and upon its own purposes and plans. In this stage we have present to the mind—

Factors in deliberation.

(a) The self regarded as an object, as a person with a certain character more or less developed, and a plan of life more or less rudimentary and crude:

(b) One or more "kinæsthetic ideas" whose impulsive tendency is for the moment arrested:

(c) Desires or aversions arising from the inclination of the self towards or away from the objects competing for its acceptance:

(3) Choice.

(3) *Choice*.—Deliberation ends when the self decides to accept some one of the conflicting ideas, which have

¹ The freedom of the Will is here assumed. A treatment of the question comes later. In a science like ethics a certain metaphysical, or non-metaphysical, groundwork has to be assumed at starting, and work proceeds on the basis of that assumption. The justification of such assumptions is indeed partly to be found in their working value.

hitherto been the object of deliberation. If the means for carrying out the idea are at hand, the action prompted by the idea at once follows. Thus the idea chosen becomes a motive, and the self by choosing it identifies itself with the idea and its realisation.

If we characterise the process in general terms we should say that the entire process leading up to the final decision or determination is one of selective attention. The process generally characterised as one of selective attention, It is by controlling attention that the self pauses, deliberates, and is finally enabled to choose.

"The essential achievement of the will, when it is most 'voluntary,' is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind."¹ It is by concentrating attention upon an idea that originally weak impulses may be made strong. "Sustained in this way by a resolute effort of attention, the difficult object ere long begins to call up its own congeners and associates and ends by changing the disposition of the man's consciousness altogether. And with his consciousness his action changes, for the new object, once stably in possession of the field of his thoughts, infallibly produces its own motor effects. The difficulty lies in the gaining possession of that field. Though the spontaneous drift of thought is all the other way, the attention must be kept strained on that one object until at last it grows, so as to maintain itself before the mind with ease. This strain of the attention is the fundamental act of will."² Such control of the attention is the fundamental and necessary condition of the final determination and effort which is the proper act of choice—the result and culmination of the whole process.

From another point of view the process may also be described as one of "moral integration." and as one of "moral integration." By choosing

¹ James, *op. cit.*, vol. II. p. 561.

² *Ibid.*, p. 562.

an object the self grafts the object upon its character so that it becomes part of the life of the self. Our several acts of choice are not isolated but organically connected, and thus each act of choice helps on a change in the entire moral being of the man and constitutes an organisation or integration of impulse.

§ 22. *Desire, Appetite, Instinct, and Impulse.*

Desire defined
and analysed

Desire may be defined as the inclination of the self towards an object considered as likely to give satisfaction to the self. It involves

- (a) the idea or representation of the object desired;
- (b) the idea of the self also as an object, and as related to the object desired;
- (c) and, as there can be no ideas in the mind without corresponding feelings, it involves also the feelings connected with the idea of the object desired, and those connected with the idea of the self as its own object and as related to the object desired.
- (d) a state of tension in consequence of the inclination of the feeling self towards an object of desire not yet attained.

Appetite defined
and distinguished
from
desire.

Appetite may be defined as mere unreasoning inclination toward an object arising from the bodily and organic conditions of animal existence. There is thus a very clear and well-marked distinction between appetite and desire. "Human desires are not mere irrational forces or tendencies propelling a man this way and that way." "The lower animals have appetites and are determined by them, but we have no reason to attribute to them the power of conceiving objects of desire. On the other hand, man also is said to have appetites, but these are

only the raw material of desire, as sensations may be said to be the raw material of perception. So soon as we become conscious of them as elements which compete for the determination of our conduct, they have ceased to be mere appetites in becoming desires, just as the sensation of which we are conscious as an element in knowledge is no longer a mere sensation, but an object of perception."¹ Thus what was the region of appetite in the animal naturally develops into the region of desire in a rational being.

This distinction serves to bring out the peculiar feature of desire. "Desire is feeling accompanied with the additional sense of self-hood."² "Desire of that kind which is a factor in our human experience . . . involves a consciousness of its object, which in turn implies a consciousness of self. In this consciousness of objects which is also that of self, or of self which is also a consciousness of objects, we have the distinguishing characteristic of desire (as we know it), of understanding and of will, as compared with those processes of the animal soul with which they are apt to be confused."³ It is the more necessary to insist upon the truth in this matter inasmuch as the theory as to the object of desire determines to a great extent the bent of an ethical theory, and forms with the school of hedonist moralists in particular the foundation of their whole system.

Instinct is a propensity which spontaneously, with untaught ability, institutes means to an end not pre-conceived, in response to stimulation from within the motor centres. It is an oxymoron, displaying as its most

The special characteristic of desire.

Instinct defined and distinguished from desire.

¹ Muirhead: *Elements of Ethics*, p. 122.

² W. T. Harris: *Hegel's Logic*, p. 393.

³ Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 123. See the whole chapter, Book II. chap. II., especially §§ 115-129.

striking feature unconscious purpose, the unintelligent performance of works of intelligence, and it was accordingly defined by Sir William Hamilton as "an agent which performs blindly and ignorantly a work of intelligence and knowledge."¹ It is clearly distinguished from desire by the absence of any conception of an object in relation to the self; for while desire is characterised by always possessing an idea of the end, instinct sets in motion means leading to an end of which it is itself unaware.

Impulse defined
and distinguished from
desire and
instinct.

Impulse is simply a propensity to act arising suddenly on the application of a stimulus whether internal or external. Impulse forms, as we have already seen, the datum of the volitional life, and the manner in which volition directs and guides the impulsive tendencies has been explained in the preceding section. Desire is clearly distinguished from impulse inasmuch as the latter is not controlled by distinct ideas, is not rational, and involves no conception of the self as related to a possible end of action. The manner in which instinct is related to impulse is somewhat peculiar. It will be seen on consideration that instinct is a method of regulation as regards impulses. In the animal the organisation of the impulses is accomplished entirely by instinct. In following its impulses instinctively, the animal fulfils entirely the purpose of its being. And even in man we speak of a certain group of impulses as being instinctive, by which we mean that such impulses are directed and regulated by instinct. Thus, while impulse is a propensity to act, instinct is a propensity to act in a certain way, and is an organising or regulating force having a certain group of impulses as its datum.

¹ Hamilton's edition of *Reid's Works*, p. 791. The phrase "untaught ability" is borrowed from Dr. Reid. See his *Senses and the Intellect*, p. 246.

§ 23. *Motive and Intention.*

The term motive, as its name denotes, simply means that which moves us. But it is by no means easy to determine how this is to be defined, or wherein lies the moving force which acts upon the will or excites the impulse to action. If we use the term motive in the psychology of involuntary movements, it would mean the sensation or idea which impels the man to act. It seems, however, more proper to limit its use to the case of volitional activity. Even here the use of the term motive varies between at least two divergent conceptions.

(a) It is identified with the element of feeling present in desire.

(b) It is by others identified with the idea of an object conceived as desirable.

Now although it is doubtless true that feeling must be an element in motive,¹ it is impossible to regard the element of feeling in desire as identical with motive, and that for two main reasons: in the first place motive implies conception of an end or purpose, and in the second place, motive has moral quality which mere feeling as such has not. Thus though all voluntary action is preceded by feeling, feeling cannot be dignified with the name of that power which moves the self.

Motive may with much greater accuracy be identified with the idea of an object conceived as desirable, for the latter implies both a reference to an end or purpose and the requisite element of feeling. But though this identification is legitimate, the precise terms of the identification must be carefully borne in mind; and to secure

¹ "Mere reasoning can never set anything going": Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, VI. ii. § 5. Aristotle, however, contemptuously rejects "sense" as an explanation of motive, *ib.* § 2.

this end, we may finally define motive with Mr. Muirhead as "the idea of an object which through congruity with the character of the self, moves the will."¹ Regarded psychologically, motive also carries with it a representation of actions considered as means to the attainment of the object chosen. A motive is a desire placed in immediate dynamic relation to the will, and as such will include not merely the impulsive feeling which is an element in desire, but also an actual representation of a certain course of action as calculated to satisfy the desire.

Relation of
motive to the
will or self

The motive is thus not a determining force distinct from ourselves, but a force arising from the self, created and determined by our own earlier volition and action. The mere idea of an object would have no power to move the will, did it not meet response from the character of the self. And the motive is thus constituted by a twofold condition: the idea of an end or object which becomes a stimulus to action because of the character of the self; the self having been organised or integrated by previous acts of choice which have grafted certain ends or objects into its very nature.

Intention
defined.

Intention is a wider term than motive, inasmuch as it covers the negative as well as the positive elements in an act of choice. It denotes the whole set of desires, actions, and consequences consciously perceived and chosen at the time of willing, as well as the whole set of desires, actions, and consequences which are at the same time perceived and rejected. It includes the choosing of certain objects and the rejecting of others.

¹Muirhead: *Elements of Ethics*, p. 60. Cf. Green: *Prolegomena*, Book II. chap. i. §§ 85-86. To conceive of an object as desirable is to place it in a certain relation to the self.

§ 24. *Will and Feeling.*

The question of the relation of feeling to will is one of great controversy. On the one hand it is maintained that feeling, or pleasure, is the only object of desire. On the other hand, that it is never the object of desire. But it would seem equally unscientific to maintain either of these views. The first is based upon an inadequate analysis of desire, and on a confusion between the supposed idea of pleasure alleged to be the sole motive to action, and the pleasure taken in the idea which actually moves the will; ¹ while both views are opposed to ordinary human experience. We need then to choose a view somewhere between these two.

Opposite theories as to relation of feeling to will both equally unscientific. The true view lies between them.

In the animal life instinctive impulse, activity which would otherwise be blind, is guided and illuminated by feeling. The animal is moved to act by feelings which urge him along a path the end of which is unknown to him. Such is instinctive action.

Feeling guides instinct

Now, voluntary action is based on involuntary action. Volition does not create new activities, it only modifies and selects existing activities, and converts them into expressions of the character of the self. This has already been shown. Feeling, therefore, which was present in involuntary action must also be present in volitional activity. In contemplating an object of desire, the self undoubtedly feels as well as knows. The idea of the object includes the feelings which are connected with the action contemplated, and the idea, on its part, calls forth certain feelings in the self, to which the self responds by inclining towards the object of desire. Feeling thus mediates between the self and the object of desire, and continues its guidance even in voluntary activity.

and continues to guide volitional activity,

¹ Cf. Muirhead: *The Elements of Ethics*, pp. 119, 120.

though it is now transformed and modified into "self-satisfaction."

But the guidance of feeling is now illuminated by the fuller light of self-consciousness. 'The feeling which worked in the earlier stages is now modified and transformed.' It cannot be accurately spoken of as pleasure in the sense which that term usually bears. Rather it becomes self-satisfaction, in the highest sense of the term, the feeling which attaches itself to the realisation of the end of life.

Thus it is unscientific to detach feeling from thought, and to say that we pursue pleasure only, and it is as unscientific to detach thought from feeling, and to say that the life of volitional activity contains no element of feeling.

§ 25 *Intellect and Will.*

Voluntary action involves

Voluntary action involves memory, imagination, and thought.

(a) Thought,

(a) Thought is necessary because we must conceive of ourselves and our desires as objects, compare the different ends or objects before us, and judge which desire should be chosen by the self. Purpose implies thought. It is because of his self-conscious thought that man is not the creature of instinct and impulse.

(b) Imagination,

(b) But in order to conceive of himself, and his desires as objects, man needs imagination. He needs it too to widen his horizon and enable him to look into the distant future, so as rightly to condition his acts of choice.

(c) Memory.

(c) Again, imagination of the future must be based upon memory of the past. It is thus that Shakespeare is enabled to say that "purpose is but the slave to memory."¹ Memory is, moreover, necessary to the acquisition of a stock of motor experience.

¹ *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 2, quoted by Housman, *op. cit.*, p. 327, q.v.

Memory, imagination, and thought thus underlie the action of the will, and upon their clearness, liveliness, and distinctness largely depends its development.

The necessity of these to the development of will.

"The more firmly and clearly the thought of the remote, as compared with the momentary end, presents itself to consciousness, or the thought of the difficulty or disadvantage attending the action demanded by impulse and wish; the more powerful the feelings which this thought is able to excite—feelings in which the conjectured consequences of the action are anticipated or enjoyed and suffered from—the more easily will the momentary incentive be inhibited, and the will determined by more remote or higher considerations. Even if the wish is stirred, it now remains a 'vain' wish, the consciousness of the impossibility or unfitness of its realisation coming into play. It then comes to be a trial of strength between the logic of the impulse and the higher logic. . . . Psychologically, it is a question only of the strength, not of the worth, of the forces determining the action. . . . It is then purely a question of what thoughts and memories are excited by the idea connected with the impulse, and what strength of feeling these can command as compared with the immediate incentive." 1

§ 26. *Will and Self.*

The self expresses its nature in voluntary activity. It is true that the self cannot will unless objects of desire are present to the mind, and that it cannot choose except between such objects as are present to it. But the self, through its power of controlling attention, feeling, and thought, and so of controlling all its ideas, is always able to express itself in voluntary actions. It is in acts of

The will is the mode in which the self finds its most characteristic and complete expression.

will that the self finds its completest expression. The will is thus not something externally related to the self. It is rather that mode of the self in which it moves by its powers of self-consciousness and self-determination to the realisation of an object of desire. That mode in which the self is most characteristically displayed and most completely expressed.

§ 27. *Freedom of the Will.*

The question of free-will postponed for metaphysical consideration, as insoluble on psychologic grounds.

But it is a necessary ethical postulate.

Further discussion as to the nature of the self and the freedom of the will must for the present be postponed as involving metaphysical considerations. The question of free will is absolutely insoluble on strictly psychological grounds. The psychologist can do no more than deal with the fact that in every act of choice we have the consciousness of an alternative being also possible. Whether or not this consciousness is a delusion is a question for the solution of which we must use methods and data other than those which psychology supplies. Here it must suffice to say that unless there is a spiritual self or person there is no freedom of the will, and unless the will is free there is no such thing as morality, or moral philosophy. No explanation can be given of why I ought to do what is right unless I can do what is right. Obligation necessarily implies power to fulfil it.

CHAPTER IV.

(A) MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

FOLLOWING the psychology of the will and the important data which it furnishes to ethics, there comes a second psychological investigation into the nature of the moral consciousness, the object of moral judgment, and the nature of the moral faculty and sentiment.

§ 28. *What Moral Consciousness is.*

• Moral consciousness is the knowledge, which we have with ourselves, of a right and a wrong, of a duty which we ought to do, and of an end or purpose in life. It also includes the feelings and sentiments that accompany the ideas of right, duty, and good, and the consciousness of power of self-determination in our activity. It thus involves a consciousness of knowledge, of feelings, and of self-determination.

Moral consciousness is consciousness of right, duty and good

§ 29. *How Moral Consciousness should be Studied.*

The business of ethics is, in the first place, to carefully examine the nature and content of our moral consciousness. In examining the moral consciousness we should start from it and return to it. The moral philosopher should begin by considering what the distinctions be-

Moral consciousness should be allowed to declare its own psychology.

tween right and wrong are and imply, judging them as they appear in consciousness, without any prejudice in favour of any particular explanation of the nature of right and wrong suggested by his other studies. When he has in this way arrived at certain conclusions regarding the facts of his own moral consciousness, he should compare his results with the facts of the moral consciousness of his fellowmen so far as this can be known. If his theories contradict these facts, the theories must be abandoned.

Moral philosophers very frequently forget to observe this caution. They approach the study of moral consciousness with the belief already formed that it will resemble something else which they have already studied. Thus the physicist believes that the facts of moral consciousness must somehow be made to illustrate the laws of physical causation, and the biologist's mind is preoccupied by the opinion that moral life is controlled by the same laws as physical life.

§ 30. *Theories as to the Explanations of Moral Consciousness.*

Theories which explain it in terms of some other consciousness are open to three general objections.

It has thus come about that many writers on ethics have endeavoured to identify the right with some other prominent fact of consciousness. In particular, writers on ethics have maintained that the right is merely a species of the pleasant, or of the health-giving, or of the beautiful, or of the true, or of the fitting.

We do not propose to offer at this stage anything like a detailed examination of such theories. Certain of them will offer themselves for more detailed treatment later on, but they are all alike open to conclusive objections.

(a) They are explanations offered by prejudiced observers, who approach the study of ethics with the intention of wresting from it certain conclusions which they have already formed, antecedent to this study.

(a) They are prejudiced.

(b) They are admittedly opposed to the facts of moral consciousness as generally received. Thus the *onus probandi* lies upon the philosophers who adduce them, and not upon the supporter of an ethical theory proper. And in no case have such explanations reached a stage of proof which would justify an abandonment of the most deeply-rooted feelings of human consciousness.

(b) They contradict generally accepted fact.

(c) They are open to the objection that they identify moral consciousness with some one or other of its 'accidental' phases and qualities. Thus, for example, the right may often be the pleasant, and is always beautiful and true. But by no logic can this justify the conclusion that any one of these terms is a complete explanation of the right, any more than the fact that all surfaces have colour, would justify us in concluding that colour is a complete explanation of surface.

(c) They confuse an essential quality with an accidental phase.

§ 31. *Right an Ultimate Fact.*

We may then state it as a fact of moral consciousness that rightness and wrongness are unique and unanalysable qualities belonging to voluntary human actions. Rightness has this distinguishing feature in common with all ultimate facts of consciousness; there is no simpler term by which we can explain it, there is no method by which we can prove it, there is no mark by which we can indicate it. We can show it, and we can point to it, but we cannot prove it or explain it. A leaf is green because it is green. If you ask me what green is, I can only show it to you. I cannot prove to you that the leaf is green. I can only say that if you do not see that the

Rightness is an unique and unanalysable quality, an ultimate fact.

leaf is green you are colour-blind. So, too, with rightness: we look at an act, and we see it to be right. If asked what rightness is, we can only answer by pointing to this or that particular act or motive or feeling as right. We may bring forward considerations to strengthen our view, but apart from certain assumptions we cannot prove it in controversy. Our final argument is an appeal to the general testimony of moral consciousness. If you reply that your moral consciousness offers no such testimony, it only remains for us to say that your moral consciousness must be defective, or at any rate abnormal. Rightness is thus an ultimate fact of human consciousness.¹

• § 32. *Right an Universal Principle.*

Rightness is an universal principle.

From this it inevitably follows that right is an universal principle. By the universality of a principle is meant that within the sphere of its application its meaning remains constant, and that it is a necessary factor in human life and experience. Now if right is an ultimate fact of human consciousness it must everywhere and at all times be self-identical, and it must everywhere and at all times be present as an element in human life. The apparent diversity of moral judgments among men in no way affects the universality of the principle of right. Such diversity consists in applying the terms 'right' and 'wrong' as predicates to characterise divergent and even opposite ideas. But unless the notion embodied in the terms 'rightness' and 'wrongness' remained self-identical, these terms could not be used intelligently at all, and no argument as to diversity could be based upon their use. In other words the argument as to diversity of moral judgment assumes a constant and invariable notion of rightness and wrongness *per se*. Moral per-

Its universality is not affected by the diversity of moral judgments among men;

¹ See Sidgwick: *Methods of Ethics*, p. 34.

versity no more destroys the universality of moral principles than mathematical ignorance destroys the universality of mathematical axioms.

Further: in order to maintain the universality of the notion of right in the sense that it is present in all men, it is not necessary to maintain that it is by all men perceived analytically as a clearly defined fact of consciousness. It is sufficient to show that all men imply this notion in their activity, and the facts of life amply warrant such a belief. The belief is arrived at in two ways: first by consideration of the place occupied by the notion of right in our own consciousness, a consideration which leads us to regard it as ultimate and unique; and secondly by a reference of this conclusion to the test of the actual history of mankind, which reference warrants the statement that there never has been a race of men of whom it could be said that they were entirely non-moral. We may add that on this point also the analogy of mathematical axioms is entirely valid.

nor by the absence of reflective consciousness of right in some men.

§ 33. *Right as Obligatory.*

Another characteristic of rightness is that it is always obligatory. To regard an action as right is, as we have already said, to regard it as an action which ought to be done. The two parts of the proposition are inseparable. The mere recognition of rightness carries with it a prescription to realise the right. It is by this characteristic that rightness is distinguished from every other fact in the world.

Rightness is always obligatory.

(B) OBJECT OF THE MORAL JUDGMENT.

(A) § 34. *Rightness in the Motives Chosen.*

What is the object of moral judgment? What is it that we call right or wrong?

The moral judgment is passed on persons,

(a) Self-evidently it is persons exclusively and not things. The terms of morality are applied to objects of nature only in so far as they are personified, and to the products of art only in so far as they are held to indicate the nature of the producer.

on the voluntary actions of persons,

(b) Self-evidently, too, it is the voluntary actions of persons which we call right or wrong. Acts done without choice, whether under external compulsion or by the mere drift of spontaneity, are not to be called right or wrong; they are mere exhibitions of force, and a force, simply as such, is no moral object at all.¹

and on the motives of such actions;

(c) And, once more, it is the motives of the voluntary actions of persons that we call right or wrong. We might infer this from the fact that it is persons to whom we applied the terms right or wrong, and that in voluntary actions the person identifies himself with the motive.

as may be seen by an analysis of action.

Action has been analysed into three stages: (1) the motive whence it springs; (2) the muscular movements in which it consists; and (3) the consequences in which it issues. The moral judgment is properly directed upon the first of these alone. The second and third have no moral quality, except in so far as they form part of the motive or intention of the first stage. When the Calendar in the Arabian story slipped with a knife in his hand, and stabbed the young man in the subterranean chamber, the muscular movements of the Calendar and

¹ This does not mean that we may not condemn a man for acting in obedience to spontaneous impulses when he might have acted with deliberation. But it is to be noticed that what we condemn in this case is not the spontaneity, which is non-moral, but the absence of volition and control where they should have been present. The will is still the object of the judgment, though it is the defect and not the misdirection of volition which is the object of censure. This is involved in the statement that persons are the only objects of moral judgment.

their unfortunate consequences had in themselves no moral significance whatever, and his action could only be called unfortunate and not wicked. But when action has a motive it will also have moral quality, which will depend upon the nature of the motive. Thus, if the Calendar in our illustration had deliberately acted from motives of revenge, his act would be justly condemned as having a bad motive.

From the definitions of motive and desire already given it is clear that motive includes (a) the idea of a certain object; (b) feelings, presented and represented; and (c) the representation of certain actions as means towards the attainment of the object. If, then, a motive is right, such feelings and actions are right,¹ and in a sense also the concrete thing chosen, and thus moral worth is spoken of as attaching to such feelings and actions, and even to things regarded as objects of choice. We may say then that rightness is primarily attributed to persons,—that is to say, to the motives of the voluntary actions of persons; and comes secondarily to be attributed to certain feelings and actions and things.

~~It is sometimes maintained that the consequences of our actions are the real object of moral judgment, as is shown by the fact that we do habitually pass moral judgments on men solely from a consideration of the consequences of their actions. But it is only willed consequences of which this can be maintained, and willed consequences are indistinguishable from motive. Where we cannot regard consequences as willed, we have no data for a moral judgment.~~

Three consequences seem to follow from the fact that

¹That is, of course, from a strictly moral point of view: the argument does not exclude the possibility of mistake, or intellectual wrongness.

rightness is properly predicated of the motives of the voluntary actions of persons.

The right motive is chosen in preference to rejected alternatives.

(1) Such motives are the objects of choice or preference. This means that the person choosing had before him at least two alternatives. Our analysis of volition has shown that in deliberation the self contemplates at least two objects---self, and some object of desire. Thus the self chooses, at the very least, between itself with the object of desire, and itself without the object of desire. But, as a rule, the objects of desire present in deliberation are numerous, some compatible with one another, and some incompatible. So the self usually has to choose between many alternatives.

But, in any case, voluntary action being a choice implies an alternative, and the motive of the voluntary action is always chosen in preference to alternatives which are rejected. "*Comparison*," as Dr. Martineau says, "is essential to purpose; and to comparison, plurality. Or, to put the matter in another light, more true perhaps to our self-consciousness: that which we judge is (as we have seen) the inner spring of action. But how can we *judge it* if it be the only thing there, and absolutely fill the field of mental vision? All judgment is relative, and predicates distinction; and our mind could attach no attribute to a spring of action did we not see it side by side with something dissimilar; which is nothing less than some possible substitute, *some other spring of action*, displaying the complementary colours to the moral eye." Endeavour to do away with this duality; thin off this second object till it melts into the surrounding field; still there remains this *surrounding field itself*; and you at least have before you, as the condition of judgment, your mind *with* the given spring of action, and your mind *without it*; the positive to compare

with the negative, the active with the passive, living force with abstergent inertia." ¹

(2) In the second place, if we consider rightness under the aspect of excellence we are led to perceive that rightness or moral worth is a thing which admits of degrees. If we are to choose between alternatives it is evident that these must differ in moral worth in order to provide data for a moral judgment. This difference, moreover, may vary considerably in extent, and is but seldom a difference between the absolutely good, on the one hand, and the absolutely evil on the other. For though it may sometimes happen that of two possible courses of action one is absolutely evil, while the other is entirely excellent, it is more often the case that our choice lies between courses of action any one of which might conceivably be right in the absence of a higher alternative barring the way to its adoption. Thus the unique quality of rightness which is found in the motives of moral actions is a quality which admits of degrees, like heat or magnitude. In deliberation the objects of possible choice appear to the self to be higher or lower in respect of moral worth.

The rightness in motives varies in degree.

(3) Lastly, for an act of choice to be performed at all, the rejected alternatives must have been viewed as possible to the choosing self. Were they not so, the motive chosen would be merely the consequent of necessitating antecedents—merely the offspring of an outer or an inner necessity, and there would, properly speaking, be no act of choice at all.²

The rejected alternatives must have been possible courses of action.

¹ Maistreau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II. pp. 35, 36.

² Once more the freedom of the will appears as a working hypothesis. But here it is also something more. If choice is a fact, then free-will is a fact. If free-will is not a fact, then choice is a delusion. Thus the fact of free-will is not assumed in our analysis so much as involved in it.

(B) § 35. *Rightness in Intention.*

Rightness may also be said to be in the 'intention' of an action.

The above considerations seem to settle the question—whether it is the motive or the intention of a voluntary action that is properly called right. We have said that the predicate 'right' is properly applied to the motive of a person, but it would be equally correct to say that it is properly applied to the intention. For the motive is right only if it has been chosen in preference to other objects of desire of lower worth. If, then, it is right to choose the motive, it must also be right to reject the alternative objects of desire, and therefore the term right is also applied to the intention, which, as we have seen, means the choosing of the motive, together with the rejecting of the alternative objects of desire.

§ 36. *Characteristics of Rightness.*

We may now sum up the characteristics which we have laid down as belonging to rightness:

- (a) It is unique and unanalysable, an ultimate fact.
- (b) It is universal—that is to say, what right means for me it means for everyone.
- (c) It is obligatory—that is to say, what is right ought to be done.
- (d) It is primarily a quality of persons—that is of the motives of the voluntary actions of persons; and then comes to be applied to the feelings, actions, and things which enter into those motives.
- (e) It admits of degrees.

(C) MORAL FACULTY

§ 37. *What Faculty Mean*

It is customary for psychologists to use the word faculty to denote the power by which the mind comes to have any particular set of experiences. Psychologists classify the different aspects of mental life and activity, and, abstracting some one particular aspect, assign it to a particular faculty. Thus they assign the sensations of light to a particular faculty of seeing, and the sensations of sound to a particular faculty of hearing. It is sometimes said that to speak of separate faculties in our nature is to overlook the fact that mind is an organic unity, and that the 'faculty hypothesis' is obsolete and absurd. But these objections have been greatly exaggerated. A faculty is not a separate agent of the mind, nor are we to conceive of the self as made up of a bundle of detached faculties. The distinction of faculties is based upon distinctions in our experience. We know, as a matter of fact, that certain kinds of experiences are radically distinguishable from certain other kinds of experiences as regards their nature and content, and to mark this distinction we assign each to a particular faculty. This is all that is meant when we speak of separate faculties.

§ 38. *What Moral Faculty Means.*

Now, if the moral distinctions of right and wrong be unique and unanalysable, the operations of the mind in reference to this distinction must be in the same degree distinct and peculiar, just as seeing and hearing are in some degree distinct and peculiar. It will, therefore, be in accordance with the uses of psychology, if we

'Faculty' denotes the power by which the mind comes to have any particular set of experiences

If moral consciousness is unique, there must be a special faculty corresponding to it.

assign the distinctions of right and wrong to a particular faculty of the mind which we may call the moral faculty.

which is concerned with the apprehension of moral distinctions and the production of morally right actions.

The moral faculty may be defined as the faculty of the mind which is concerned with the apprehension of moral distinctions and the production of morally right actions. It will be a separate and unique mental faculty if moral distinctions are unique and unanalysable. As in the case of all mental faculties, its operations will involve knowing, feeling, and willing, but they will probably involve one of these phases in a more marked degree than the other two.

§ 39. *Moral Sense.*

Moral sense an inadequate and misleading name for the moral faculty.

In the eighteenth century English psychologists, following Locke, were led to believe that the fundamental aspect of mental activity was sensation and feeling. All ideas, they thought, must be derived from sensation or feeling, and hence moral ideas must ultimately be derived from moral sensations or feelings, and the moral faculty would be a capacity for a peculiar sort of sensation or feeling, like our feeling of red colour or sweet tastes or our emotions of beauty. Hence these writers call the moral faculty moral sense. This is a very false and misleading name for the moral faculty. Those who use it forget the essential character of rightness. Right is the same thing for all men, and right is obligatory, or that which ought to be done. Now these characteristics do not belong to our sensations and feelings, and the term moral sense thus fails to indicate just those essential characteristics of rightness which claim for it a special faculty in human consciousness.

§ 40. *Moral Reason.*

Moral reason discerns rightness.

It would be preferable to call the moral faculty moral reason, seeing that it is reason that plays the most

prominent part in our consciousness or perception of right action.

(a) The differences of moral worth which we discover in motives or in objects of desire are more like differences in the space properties of objects of perception than any other qualities which we apprehend. for reason discerns universal relations

(i) Rightness like size is comparative. You cannot call a thing long or short, large or little, till you have compared it with some other thing; and you cannot call a motive right or wrong till you have compared it with some other object or objects of desire to which it has been preferred.

(ii) Again the space properties of a thing are always the same. In a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is always equal to the sum of the squares on the sides containing the right angle, and moral relations like mathematical relations are always the same in all places and under all circumstances. Now it is reason that apprehends such relations. It therefore seems not unnatural to say that it is a moral reason which apprehends moral relations.

(b) In deliberation the self and the desires present to it are conceived as objects, and the motive chosen largely depends upon the way in which they are self-conceived. Again, the self is conceived as rational, and rationality is in itself a ground for choice. Thus reason both consciously and unconsciously enters very largely into the constitution of motives. reason conceive desires as objects

(c) Lastly, it is reason which infers one duty from another, and reason which enables us to systematise our conduct. reason infers duties

On the essentially rational character of the moral faculty we may profitably refer to the ethical systems of Kant and Butler. Butler strongly maintains that a

moral faculty is an essential element in our nature, and habitually speaks of it as a reasoning or reflective power. "That which renders beings capable of moral government is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensities: so also are we. But additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought"¹ "There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions . . . This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions is conscience."² Kant, on the other hand, draws out much more fully, and with deeper analysis, the character of the moral faculty as rational intuition, and declares "that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in the reason, and that in the commonest reason just as truly as in that which is in the highest degree speculative."³ Kant's whole theory of ethics is based upon the position that moral conceptions are essentially rational; he maintains that "there is properly no other foundation" for an ethical system "than the critical examination of a pure practical reason";⁴ and 'practical reason' is his characteristic name for the moral faculty.

§ 41. *What Moral Reason tells us.*

Moral reason intuitively apprehends general principles, but not concrete duties.

If then the moral faculty be essentially rational, it will work in two ways. In the first place it will intuitively apprehend universal principles; and, in the second place, it will apply these intuitively apprehended principles by a rational moral inference. It has been

¹ Butler: *Of the Nature of Virtue.*

² *Ib.* Sermon I.

³ *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, ed. Abbott, p. 28.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 2.

supposed that the moral reason is able to intuitively discern the exact moral value of every motive or every course of action. But this supposition does not seem to be true to fact. What then does moral reason by itself immediately and intuitively apprehend? It apprehends intuitively

1. That right exists.
2. What rightness is: in other words, the ideal of human personality, the good of man's being.
3. That the right lays upon us an obligation to realise it.

But moral reason does not immediately and intuitively apprehend the particular course of duty which we ought to follow in any particular case. Between the general conceptions of the moral reason, on the one hand, and the circumstances of the individual on the other, there is a gap which the general principles by themselves cannot bridge.¹

At the same time it is true to say that in most cases where a particular duty is in question, a man's conscience, which is ordinarily regarded as only another name for the moral reason, works in the manner of an immediate instinct, and with all the rapidity which we usually assign only to an intuitive process. This apparent contradiction may be solved by drawing a distinction between conscience and the moral reason.

§ 42. *Conscience*

Like all our faculties moral reason is enriched and overlaid with a multitude of ideas, feelings, and tendencies, which we have inherited from our ancestors or acquired during our life. It may, on the one hand, by repeated exercise on particular cases of duty, come to

Conscience is moral reason working intuitively on particular cases, and possessed of a particular positive content.

¹ See Müller: *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. I. pp. 53 ff.

work on such cases intuitively, as we learn to measure distance immediately with the eye; and, on the other hand, its positive content will depend on heredity and experience, and will therefore vary considerably from individual to individual owing to differences of heredity and experience. And that in two ways. In the first place, there will be a difference in the nature and number of the problems of duty which have presented themselves for solution, causing an immense difference in the moral experience of different individuals; and, in the second place, misapplication of the principles of the moral reason, or an ignoring of them, will result in vast differences of moral capacity and moral sensitiveness, wrong application becoming stereotyped in a distorted moral consciousness, and non-application settling down into moral lethargy. Moral reason working intuitively on particular questions of duty, and possessed of a particular positive content we call conscience.

Appeal from the individual conscience to the universal principles of moral reason.

Now, under ordinary circumstances conscience at once decides what motive is right, and it is natural and fitting that under ordinary circumstances we should be content with the verdict of conscience. But the moral philosopher, and ordinary people too in extraordinary circumstances, cannot be content to rest here. The moral philosopher on examining conscience finds that it employs conflicting tests of right action; that the verdicts of one man's conscience cannot always be harmonised with the verdicts of another man's conscience, or even with one another, and that a large portion of the contents of conscience has been inherited or acquired. When such is found to be the case, it becomes necessary to perform an act of analysis which shall unfold the fundamental conceptions of the moral reason, and to go back to the universal principles which lie at the base of

all consciences however much their positive content may have been contaminated by accretions from a debasing experience. When this has been done, the particular duty is to be inferred by rational moral inference. There is thus in these cases an appeal from the verdict of an individual conscience to the universal principles of the moral reason.

Again: there arise at times cases in regard to which conscience seems no longer to work with the rapidity of an intuition, but needs to be supported by a process of thought and deliberation. Moral reason, having performed its task of immediately apprehending universal principles, is now required, to terminate the indecision of conscience by rational moral influence which shall place the particular case in its proper relation to the life of the self, the process being based upon the universal principles already intuitively apprehended. There is thus in these cases an appeal from the indecision of conscience to the rational inference of the moral reason.

This distinction between conscience and the moral reason serves to explain both how the perception of a particular course of duty may become an intuition, and also why the apparent conflict and want of harmony between the verdicts of different individual consciences, and between the verdicts of the same conscience at different times, does not disturb our belief in the universality of the principle of right.

But we must not hastily infer from this analysis that there is nothing original and nothing authoritative in our moral consciousness. When we see an object at some distance away from us, the fact that a large portion of our knowledge of the object is due to acquired perceptions, and that our estimate of its distance and size is based upon various acquired tests, does not prove

Value of the distinction between conscience and the moral reason.

This analysis in no way invalidates the authority of moral reason, or, ordinarily, of conscience.

that sight is not an original faculty, or shake our confidence in it under ordinary circumstances. And so, too, in the case of conscience we ought not to distrust its verdict, or to doubt the originality of the moral reason which lies at its root, merely because for us conscience is enlarged, and perhaps enriched, by the morality of our ancestors and the moral experience of our own past life.

§ 43. *Can Conscience be Educated?*

Controversy as to whether conscience can be educated or arises from a confusion between conscience and moral reason

The distinction between moral reason and conscience helps us to solve the much vexed question as to whether or not conscience can be educated. Kant maintains "that there is no such thing as an erring conscience",¹ and Dr. Calderwood puts forward the same view with the utmost plainness. "From its nature it follows that conscience cannot be educated. Education, whether in the sense of instruction or training, is impossible. As we teach the eye to see, and the ear to hear, so we teach Reason 'to perceive self-evident truth.'² On the other hand, most philosophers have agreed that conscience can be educated and may err; while the facts of life compel us to admit that the consciences of men and of races are in very different stages of development, and that in the life of the individual it is often happily the case that the conscience gains in illumination and in sensitiveness. The account we have given of conscience enables us to see how it is capable of education in both these ways. Dr. Calderwood, following Kant, goes on to say that "unquestionably we need to guard and train our understanding in the application of moral law; for the understanding is a faculty ever liable to err, whereas the conscience, in presenting self-evident truth, is un-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 311.

² Calderwood, *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, p. 109.

erring."¹ To this we might add that a faculty may atrophy from want of exercise, the conscience no less than the eye or ear, and, from this point of view, habitual exercise is education. But it will already have been perceived that the controversy has arisen mainly from the fact that philosophers have used the same term to describe different things, and that they mean slightly different faculties when they alike talk of conscience.

§ 44. *The Imperative of the Moral Reason*

It has already been pointed out that the most characteristic feature of rightness is that it is obligatory. What exactly this obligation implies will be considered in detail at a later stage of our enquiry. But we may observe here the peculiar form in which the moral faculty gives utterance to this fact of obligation. Its command is uttered as if it were the command of another person. Its majestic imperative seems to emanate from a power which is not merely within but above man. Kant has stated this truth in a passage which well deserves quotation. "The consciousness of an internal *tribunal* in man (before which 'his thoughts accuse or excuse one another') is conscience. . . . Now this original intellectual and (as a conception of duty) moral capacity, called *conscience*, has this peculiarity in it, that though its business is a business of man with himself, yet he finds himself compelled by his reason to transact it as if at the command of another person. For the transaction here is the conduct of a trial before a tribunal. But that he who is *accused* by his conscience should be conceived as *one* and the same person with the judge is an absurd conception of a judicial court; for

Objective character of the imperative of moral reason

¹ Calderwood: *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, p. 229. Cf. also Kant, *loc. cit.*

then the complainant would always lose his case. Therefore in all duties the conscience of the man must regard *another* than himself as the judge of his actions, if it is to avoid self-contradiction."¹

(D) MORAL SENTIMENTS.

§ 15 *What we mean by 'Moral Sentiments.'*

Moral sentiments defined

By the moral sentiments we mean those feelings and emotions which arise from the contemplation of moral ideas and objects, in accordance with the well-known law of the mind that all exercise of intelligence is accompanied by experience of feeling. Intelligence directed on moral distinctions is thus attended by a particular order of feeling. The grouping of the moral sentiments under a common name does not mean that they all possess the same psychological character. Some are of the nature of mere feeling, others are rather of the nature of affections and emotions, and others again are sentiments proper. But their classification under this common name denotes that they all partake of the nature of feeling, and that they are all attendant upon the contemplation of moral ideas and objects.

They possess diverse psychological characters.

They are not a test of rightness.

It is to be noticed that the moral sentiments do not in themselves constitute any test of the moral character of actions. They may accompany a mistaken judgment of moral action as well as a true one. This is self-evident, and needs no proof to support it.

Classification of the moral sentiments.

These sentiments fall into certain well-marked groups, viz. :

- (1) The feeling of obligation.
- (2) The feelings of approbation and disapprobation.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 321, 322. The significance of this fact will be dealt with later on.

- (3) The feelings of reverence and disrespect, and the feelings of humility.
- (4) The feelings of moral beauty and moral deformity, called the æsthetic moral sentiments
- (5) The feelings of self-approbation or self-esteem, and of self-condemnation, or shame and remorse.

§ 46 *The Feeling of Obligation.*

The feeling of obligation which attaches itself to the idea of right may be called the moral sentiment proper. Whenever we recognise that a course of conduct is right we immediately feel that it ought to be followed. Through this feeling the idea of right by itself commends itself to us as a motive to action.

Feeling of obligation defined,

through it the idea of right becomes a motive.

§ 47. *The Feelings of Approbation and Disapprobation.*

The feelings of approbation and disapprobation are the feelings with which we regard different kinds of right and wrong conduct, the different kinds of conduct exciting different shades of feeling. These feelings have been called quasi-moral sentiments. Dr. Martineau truly remarks that these feelings apply only to the actions of personal beings who are subject to temptation, "organic necessity is beneath them; free sanctity is above them." At this elevation they are replaced "by the several degrees of admiration, love, and worship, towards which the ethical feelings ever aspire and in which they ultimately merge."¹

Feelings of approbation and disapprobation.

applicable only to personal beings subject to temptation

§ 48. *The Feelings of Reverence and Humility.*

The sentiment of reverence is the feeling which is called forth by conduct or character far above us in point

Sentiment of reverence :

¹ Martineau : *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II. p. 91.

how distinguished from moral approbation,

always accompanied by humility

How related to the feeling of obligation.

of excellence. It is the spontaneous lifting up of the heart towards transcendent goodness or transcendent life. Even independently of visible heroes and saints it goes forth in faith upon invisible objects felt to be better and higher than the feeling self which humbles itself in homage before them. Reverence is thus a transcendent form of moral approbation, but the attitude of the self is different in the two. In the latter the self passes a moral judgment, in the former it bows in homage before its object. Thus it is that reverence gives rise to, and is always accompanied by humility, the feeling which recognises the imperfections and limitations of the self, and looks upward with reverent gaze at natures less imperfect or altogether perfect.

There is a close connection between the sentiment of reverence and the more properly moral feeling of duty or obligation. In both we find that notion of authority which characterises all moral consciousness. But the two are not identical. The sense of obligation relates to a coercive authority, forbidding us to follow the lower motive, reverence is directed upon a persuasive authority, it is hopeful and loving, and looks up gladly and spontaneously to the higher principle and the higher character.

§ 49. *Æsthetic Moral Sentiments.*

Æsthetic moral sentiments :

Closely connected with the quasi-moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation are the æsthetic moral sentiments which arise in connection with the beauty or deformity of right or wrong actions. There is a moral beauty in moral conduct varying in degree according to the moral worth of the action under consideration.

that become impelling forces

These sentiments can become powerful impelling

forces, moral beauty possessing great attractive power, while moral deformity exercises a repulsive force even still more marked.

§ 50. *The feelings of Self-approbation or Self-esteem and of Self-condemnation or Shame and Remorse.*

Lastly there are certain inward feelings which accompany the consciousness that we have done right or wrong.

(1) Whenever we have done what we feel to be right we feel within ourselves an inward peace and satisfaction, which we may call self-approbation. And if self-approbation becomes frequent it passes into the more enduring sentiment of self-esteem or, as it is oftener called, self-respect, "the testimony of a good conscience." Feeling of self-esteem

The 18th. century moralists dwelt with undue emphasis upon this feeling of self-approbation, and thus perhaps brought it into discredit. But it has nevertheless a legitimate place in a sound and healthy moral life. It is when self-esteem passes into self-complacency that it merits the hard things which have been said of it. But it must carefully be borne in mind that the true moral sentiment of self-respect has nothing whatever in common with pride, and exists in its most healthy form when allied with a true humility which arises from the habitual recognition of the limitations of our life and our powers. Its necessity to a healthy moral life.

The loss of self-respect is a sure sign of moral disorder and disease of a most advanced and virulent nature. It is a common-place of morality that when a man has lost self-respect it is terribly difficult for him to regain a level of moral life on which it may once more come back to him. Must be with humility.
Loss of self-esteem.

Feeling of
remorse or con-
trition :

(2) Just as when we have done right we feel inward satisfaction, so when we have done wrong we feel inward dissatisfaction and uneasiness. "The testimony of a good conscience" is replaced by "the accusation of an evil conscience." As it grows stronger, this feeling passes into shame, and shame intensified and settled in the mind becomes remorse or contrition.

its influence on
moral life.

This sentiment has a powerful influence upon the moral life, and holds the most important place among the influences which keep men from continuance in immorality, both by the pain of it when present and the anticipation of it after it has once been felt.

Distinguished
from humilia-
tion or attrition,

(3) The feeling of remorse or contrition is totally distinct from the feeling of humiliation or attrition which frequently follows wrong-doing and is not unfrequently mistaken for remorse and which often taints contrition with its alloy. Attrition is not a moral feeling like remorse. It is merely the mortification of wounded pride, the feeling of having done something which will incur disgrace. Many men think they feel contrition when all they really feel is humiliation, and great care should be exercised in keeping the two apart, for while contrition lifts the self on to the height from which it had descended or even higher still, attrition will only sink it lower into depths of pride and selfishness.

practical im-
portance of the
distinction.

CHAPTER V.

STANDARD OF THE MORAL JUDGMENT.

§ 51. *What we mean by the Moral Standard.*

By the moral standard we mean the rule by which, or the reason on account of which, we judge conduct to be morally right or wrong. In a court of justice we have a legal code by which to decide and society has its code by which it approves or condemns conduct. But conduct may comply with the demands of law or of social custom without being morally right. There must, therefore, be a moral law or moral standard of right action. And as right really exists as a quality of voluntary action, and is independent of individual wishes or peculiarities, the moral law or moral standard must be absolute and objective. It appears then that there is an absolute objective standard of right action which a good man should know and in accordance with which conduct should be judged to be right or wrong. The question is, what is this moral standard?

There is an absolute objective standard of right conduct

§ 52. I. *The Moral Standard as Law.*

In answering this question it would, perhaps, seem most natural to regard the moral standard as a law, or

code of laws, and we shall do well to consider first the theories of those who do so regard it.

(A) THE STANDARD AS AN EXTERNAL CODE.

The view that this standard is an external code of moral law.

Indeed, one of the first answers to the question, what is the moral standard? is to point to some external law, as for instance, the law of Manu or the law of Moses. But reflection shows that such an external law cannot ultimately be the standard of right action.

Objections to this view.
(a) That such codes contain political and ceremonial rules which conflict with the moral rules.

(a) For such codes are usually found to combine on the same plane elements of unequal importance. Ceremonial and political rules are bound up with moral rules and often conflict with them. A good illustration of this is furnished by the Pharisaic interpretation of the Mosaic law, by which interpretation ceremonial observances were placed on a level of equal obligation with the moral law, the result being frequent conflict between the two.

(b) Its moral rules will conflict.

(b) The different parts of the moral law are found to conflict. The law says do not lie, it also says do not murder. Now, it is not difficult to imagine a case where these two laws may be in complete antagonism, as in the case of my affording protection to a man threatened by assassins who are on his track. Such a case shows that no set of particular rules embodied in a moral code can possibly be an ultimate standard of right and wrong.¹

¹ This objection might be met in two ways:

(i) We may resort to casuistry, which adds explanations and exceptions to the traditional law so as to make it cover every case. But this is an impossible task, and in any case thoroughly unsatisfactory to a mind in search of principles.

(ii) Or we may seek for one chief commandment which shall override all the other commandments and rules, e.g. love your

(c) Lastly, an external traditional code is an unsatisfactory standard of right, because it does not explain the essential characteristic of right, its obligation. It still leaves the question unanswered which the moralist sets out to solve, and we cannot possibly have arrived at a standard of morality until we have reached a principle which shall rest its authority upon no external support whatsoever.

(c) Why should it be obligatory?

(B) THE STANDARD AS CONSCIENCE. •

§. 53. (1) *According to the Common Man.*

An ordinary man would probably say conscience is the standard of right. I have a conscience. Whenever I deliberate about my conduct, conscience instantly and certainly tells me what act is right. This is the "ultra-intuitional" and "ultra-empirical" view of conscience. It is the view of the average plain man.

The view that conscience intuitively discerns what it is right to do.

But it is open to the following objections:

Objections

(a) What conscience says is often vague and indefinite, and the more closely we attend to the deliverances of conscience the more vague do they appear.

(a) The ordinary conscience is too vague, and

(b) Men's consciences do not agree.

(b) varying;

(c) When we come to analyse conscience we find, as we have already explained, that many of its ideas and feelings are acquired by inheritance or education. The voice of conscience is often merely the echo of the voice of our ancestors or of the voice of society.

(c) Conscience is in a sense a manufactured product;

(d) Moreover, on this view of conscience, it would be incapable of education and enlightenment. But it is

(d) and is capable of education and enlightenment.

neighbour as yourself. But such commandments taken by themselves generally seem to be too indefinite, and in any case they unify the problem by the suppression of difficulties.

Cf. MacIntyre's Elements of Ethics, Bk. II. ch. II.

already been pointed out that conscience is capable of education and development, and if this contention is true conscience cannot be an objective standard of right conduct. It could at best only furnish the individual with a standard for his own life, and could not furnish an absolute and objective standard.

The truth embodied in this view.

These considerations seem to destroy the utility and authority of conscience in the popular sense as the absolute and objective standard of right. At the same time this view embodies a truth, and it is the truth in it which gives it its attraction for the popular mind. We have already shown what the function of conscience is in the moral life, and from what has been said, it is clear that whatever the moral standard may be it is conscience which enables the individual to realise it in a practical application to human life. But the popular mind to which the faculty is ever present has failed to distinguish between the standard or end and the faculty which thus practically realises it.

§ 54. (2) *According to Dr. Martineau.*

Dr. Martineau's view that conscience intuitively discerns the relative moral worth of conflicting impulses.

A more philosophic view of conscience is taken by Dr. Martineau. He maintains first of all that right belongs not, as people commonly suppose, to action, but to the spring of action. No act is right in itself, or wrong in itself; what constitutes the moral character of an act is the feeling which stimulates us to perform it. He further maintains that there is a moral order of feelings as springs of action, and that the relative values and positions of the different springs of actions are known infallibly and intuitively by conscience. Men inevitably arrive at the same estimate of the relative moral value of springs of action. "Every action is right which in the presence

of a lower spring of action follows a higher; every action is wrong which in the presence of a higher spring of action follows a lower." ¹. This view of the moral standard has been aptly described as Perceptual Intuitionism.

Dr. Martineau's theory of conscience as the moral Objections. standard seems to lie open to at least two objections.

(a) The view wherever it departs from the view taken by ordinary men seems paradoxical. It seems absurd to say, as Dr. Martineau says, that one spring of action is always to be preferred to some other spring of action without regard to consequences or circumstances. For instance, compassion may be higher, as a rule, than resentment. But is not resentment sometimes a salutary balance to the weakness of pity? The view of common sense would seem to be that every spring of action is right in its proper sphere and place.

(a) Is one spring of action always higher than another?

(b) Further, common sense would surely say that the standard of right action is not merely to act from the higher impulse which may happen to present itself to the mind at a given time, but to aim at action as far as possible from the highest impulse of all, to the complete exclusion of lower impulses.

(b) Ought we not to try to act from the highest impulse of all?

§ 55. (3) *According to Reid.*

The view taken by moral philosophers who hold that conscience is the moral standard is, as a rule, very different from that of Dr. Martineau. Such philosophers commonly hold not that we intuitively know the rightness or wrongness of an action it itself, not that we intuitively know the rightness or wrongness of the spring of action as compared with other

Reid's view that we intuitively know certain first principles of morality.

¹ Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II. p. 270.

springs of action, but that we intuitively know certain first principles of morality from which we infer the rightness or wrongness of particular actions by an act of judgment.

Reid's list of
such principles

Thus Reid gives us a list of what he calls "the first principles of morals."¹ Of these six belong "to virtue in general, viz :

(1) "There are some things in human conduct that merit approbation and praise, others that merit blame and punishment, and different degrees either of approbation or of blame are due to different actions "

(2) "What is in no degree voluntary can neither deserve moral approbation nor blame."

(3) "What is done from unavoidable necessity may be agreeable or disagreeable, useful or hurtful, but cannot be the object either of blame or of moral approbation."

(4) "Men may be highly culpable in omitting what they ought to have done, as well as in doing what they ought not "

(5) "We ought to use the best means we can to be well informed of our duty."

(6) "It ought to be our most serious concern to do our duty as far as we know it and to fortify our minds against every temptation to deviate from it."

Reid also gives us a number of other principles relating to particular branches of virtue and to the comparative value of different kinds of good conduct.

On these principles conscience regulates human life, forming thus an infallible and immediate standard of right or wrong. Such a view of the moral standard may be distinguished as Dogmatic Intuitionism.

Objections—

To this theory it may be objected that—

¹ Reid; *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind*, Essay V, ch. i. (In Hamilton's Edition, p. 637.)

(a) Such an account of the moral standard can hardly be called philosophical. ~~It is little more than a re-statement of the unreflective view of the common plain man and is open to the same objection.~~ (a) It is merely a re-statement of the common man's view and is open to the same objections.

(b) It may in addition be said to exhibit two main defects: It tells us nothing of the objective nature of these moral principles. It is at most only a psychology of them, registering them as facts, but not gaining from them any knowledge of the nature of morality itself. (b) It is psychological and not objective.

(c) The several moral principles are conceived as all equally absolute; they are not reduced to the unity of a system, at the most they are generalisations which must be modified by exceptions, and not an absolute and ultimate moral standard. (c) It merely exhibits generalisations and not ultimate principles.

At the same time it must be admitted that the conception of the mode in which the moral reason operates set forth in this theory, seems to be sound and reasonable. We have already found that the work of the moral reason consists in the intuitive apprehensions of universal moral principles, and the rational application of them to particular cases of conduct. So far Reid's theory seems to be on right lines. But it is no necessary deduction from this that conscience, with a particular positive content, can be an absolute and objective moral standard.

(C) THE STANDARD AS MORAL REASON.

For the moral philosopher the moral standard must primarily be moral reason. This is the standard adopted by such writers as Locke and Clark, Price and Butler, Kant and in a manner Sidgwick, and this view of the moral standard may be termed Philosophic Intuitionism, or Rationalism.

§ 56 (1) *Locke's Statement of Rationalism.*

Locke's view
that moral
rules may be
deduced from
the conception
of ourselves as
rational beings
dependent on an
all-powerful, all-
wise, and all-
good Creator

Locke has stated the fundamental position of what may be called the rationalist view of the standard as follows:—"The idea of a supreme being, infinite in power, goodness and wisdom, whose workmanship we are and on whom we depend, and the idea of ourselves as understanding rational beings, being such as are clear in us would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations of our duty and rules of actions as might place morality among the sciences capable of demonstration; wherein, I doubt not that from self-evident propositions by necessary consequences as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to any one that will apply himself with the same indifference and attention to the one as he does to the other of these sciences"¹

§ 57. (2) *Butler's Statement of Rationalism.*

Butler's view
that the stand-
ard is human
nature with its
three coinciding
principles of
self-love, bene-
volence, and
conscience

Following Locke and the ancient Stoic philosophers, Butler² has maintained that the standard of right action is human nature, and that the one rule of right action is to follow nature. In human nature there are three controlling principles—cool self-love, universal benevolence, and conscience. These three principles, rightly understood, are never at strife. What conscience dictates is what benevolence would prompt us to do, and what benevolence would prompt us to do is what truly satisfies cool self-love. To follow the law of our nature is, as Locke has suggested, the obviously rational stan-

¹ Locke: *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. IV. ch. iii. § 18. (In Dr. Fraser's edition, vol. II. p. 208.) Cf. also Bk. III. ch. xi. § 16; Bk. IV. ch. iv. §§ 7-9.

² See Butler: *Sermons*, i., ii., iii.

dard of right action; it is also, Butler adds, the will of God our Creator. Butler accordingly gives us some five different rules of right action, all of which are supposed to lead to the same practical conclusion: Follow nature; be guided by cool self-love; listen to the pleadings of universal benevolence; obey conscience; serve God.

There can be no doubt that Butler's theory of the standard of right action is one that obviously commends itself to common sense and to reason. It seems only reasonable to demand that a being should follow the law of its own nature, and to define a good man as one who fulfils the functions of human nature. A difficulty, however, arises when we proceed to ask, What precisely is this human nature? It is, for example, the nature of a clock to mark the correct time, it is also, in another sense, the nature of a clock to deviate from the correct time. In this sense it is natural for human beings to err; but it is not in this sense that Butler bids us follow nature.

Ambiguity of the term 'nature'

To remove this ambiguity Butler is obliged, in the first place, to introduce further qualifications, and to explain that by 'nature' he means the higher, truer, real nature of man. In the second place, he attempts to define human nature by exhibiting analytically the different principles by which it is regulated. But the ambiguity is never altogether removed, and with regard to the action of his three principles it may be remarked that it would need a great deal of argument to establish the invariable coincidence of cool self-love, universal benevolence, and conscience.

§ 58. (3) *Kant's Statement of Rationalism.*

Kant has pushed the view that man is a rational being, and that his reason is the only possible standard

Kant's view that reason prescribes a general formula of right volition

of right action, to an extreme. Reason is concerned with the universal and general, not with the particular. Hence Kant supposes that reason cannot give us a test of the rightness or wrongness of particular objects of choice. And he maintains that the moral quality does not lie in the object of choice, but in the way in which we choose them, which ought to agree with a certain general formula prescribed by reason.

And that act prompted by feeling are not moral.

Further, Kant emphatically declares that since man is essentially rational he must not act from feeling. An action has no true moral value unless done in the absence of the natural inclination prompting to it, and out of pure respect for the moral law. It is for this reason that Kant's doctrine is sometimes designated 'Rigorism.'

Hence the moral standard is a formula for right action, or rather for right will, prescribed by reason.

Kant's rules for right action

The formula may be expressed in three alternative ways as follows:

(a) "So act that the maxim which guides your will may be capable of being made law universal."

(b) "So act as to use humanity, whether in yourself or in others always as an end, never as a means."

(c) "Act according to the idea of the will of all rational beings legislating supremely and universally."¹

This view is true but incomplete,

This account which Kant gives of the moral standard seems to be, as far as it goes, the very best which has yet been given by any moral philosopher. But he does not go far enough. His theory is true but incomplete and therefore inadequate. In the concrete difficulties of human life we want more definite tests of right action than mere abstract formulae. Moreover it is contrary to

and wrongly ignores the ethical value of the feelings.

¹ Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, I. and II. (see *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, Ed. by Abbott, ad. init.).

common sense to say that the feelings with which we act have nothing to do with the rightness of our action. These two objections prevent us from accepting Kant's theory with complete assent.

§ 59. II. *The Moral Standard as an End.*

Having now seen something of the views of those who regard the moral standard as a law to be obeyed, we may turn to the consideration of the views of other philosophers who prefer to regard the moral standard as an end or goal to be aimed at. The two ways of regarding the moral standard are contrasted but not incompatible; they are not conflicting but complementary. The one regards obedience to the law as the end for man; the other regards the end of human nature as constituting and explaining the moral law. The former admits the existence of an end, but defines it by the moral law; the latter perceives the claims of a moral law, but seeks to explain it in terms of the end. The emphasis is, however, in each case laid in a special direction, and this difference of direction will colour and characterise the ethical theory as a whole. Thus the standard laid down may in the two cases be practically identical, a difference arising mainly in regard to the manner in which that standard is related to human activity. The theory of Butler illustrates both points of view, for while it defines the standard as moral law, it tends to describe that law in terms of the end.

Relation between the view of standard as law, and the view of standard as an end.

There are, however, two cases in which these contrasted points of view may be incompatible. If the end be regarded as a natural law, naturally and necessarily obeyed, claiming no moral obedience and uttering no moral imperative, it is obvious that the end cannot be regarded as constituting a moral law. And, on the

other hand, if the moral law is regarded as merely an arbitrary enactment of Deity, it equally follows that obedience to it can constitute no end for human nature as such.

The question—
'What is the
standard of
right action?'
resolved into the
question 'What
is the end of
human action.'

With these preliminary remarks we may resume our consideration of the standard as an end. In the view of those philosophers whose theory we are now considering, the question 'What is the standard of right action?' is resolved into the further question, 'What is the true end of human action?' And to this question varying answers are given, which, however, group themselves into two main divisions. On the one hand perfection, and on the other hand pleasure, is declared to be the end of human nature. With regard to pleasure a further divergence occurs when we proceed to ask, 'Is it our own greatest pleasure? or is it the greatest pleasure of the greatest number?'

We shall here only briefly consider these theories, leaving the further discussion of the matter to the chapters on the end of human life.

§ 60. (A) *The End as Pleasure.*

Theory of
Hedonism.

The Hedonists maintain that the object of all desire is pleasure, and that pleasure must be the end of all human action. They do not, however, agree as to the details of their theory.

(1) *Egoistic Hedonism*.—The Egoistic Hedonist takes his own greatest pleasure as the right end of his action.

(2) *Altruistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism*.—The Altruistic Hedonist or Utilitarian takes as the right end of all action the greatest pleasure, or, as he would prefer to say, the greatest happiness, of the greatest number. But in calculating the greatest sum of happiness or pleasure the altruistic hedonists do not altogether agree. It is

agreed that everyone is to count for one, and no one for more than one; it is not agreed as to whether all pleasures are qualitatively the same.

Hedonism of every form is open to the objection that practically, as a standard of right action, it will not work. The practical comparison of pleasure with pleasure is virtually impossible. Even in one's own case pleasures vary in intensity, to say nothing of quality, from time to time and from moment to moment. And if we cannot measure and compare with accurate certitude even our own pleasures, how can we hope to measure and compare the pleasures of others. A further and fatal objection to any such comparison of pleasures as affording the rule of right action arises from the fact that the more we consciously aim at pleasure, the less does our pleasure become. Thus the hedonist is required to maintain the paradox that while the greater amount of pleasure is the supreme end of action, the conscious placing of it before us as our end renders it incapable of attainment.

(3) *Sidgwick's Statement of Utilitarianism*. — The most philosophical exposition of Utilitarianism is that presented in Dr. Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, in which an attempt has been made to combine Utilitarianism with Rationalism. Dr. Sidgwick lays down the following propositions as axioms of right conduct prescribed by the moral reason :

- (a) That pleasure is the highest good.
- (b) That what is right for one is right for any other.
- (c) That what is desirable for one is desirable for all.
- (d) That the good of any individual cannot be more intrinsically desirable, because it is his, than the equal good of any other individual.

Criticism of the theory.

Sidgwick's theory of rational Utilitarianism.

- (e) That it is irrational to sacrifice any part of my own happiness unless I myself gain an equivalent amount of happiness
- (f) That it is rational to sacrifice my own happiness if some one else gains an equivalent increase of happiness.

These last two propositions constitute what Dr. Sidgwick calls the dualism of practical reason.

Upon these axioms Dr. Sidgwick bases his standard of right action, which is the well-known utilitarian standard. "That act is right which brings the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number, everyone counting for one, and no one for more than one."

It depends upon the truth of his first axiom which will be discussed later on.

The value and authority of this rule as the sole standard of right action depends upon the truth of Dr. Sidgwick's first axiom. If, as we shall try to show later on, pleasure is not the highest good, then we cannot accept the utilitarian standard as the supreme standard of right action, even when it is put forward as a dictate of the moral reason. It may be added that Dr. Sidgwick's form of the utilitarian theory is in no way less open to the objections urged above against hedonistic theories generally than any other form of Utilitarianism.

§ 61. (B) *The End as Perfection, and the Standard as the Ideal of Personality discerned by Moral Reason.*

It remains for us to consider the view that the end of right action, and the consequent standard of right action, is the perfection of human nature, the realisation of the ideal of human personality as discerned by moral reason.

These conflicting views need to be reconciled by a conception which shall embrace both: the conception, viz., of the perfect person as the moral standard.

The accounts of the test of right action given respectively by Kant and the utilitarians each select one side of our nature and erect it into a moral standard. The Kantian view ignores sensibility altogether, and the

utilitarian view makes sensibility or pleasure its ultimate standard. But there is something unsatisfactory in this dualism. Each view embodies a great truth, and Kant's account of the moral standard is in the main a true account, and though not complete yet points in the right direction. Right conduct is, in the highest sense of the term, reasonable conduct, and reasonable conduct must not only be dictated by reason but by reason acting validly. Now, Locke has pointed out that the proper way of determining what such reasonable conduct is would be to ask what would be the conduct of an ideal moral person. In other words, the moral standard is primarily the perfect person or the moral ideal of personal life as this is discerned by moral reason. Here, then, we seem to have arrived at a standard or test which shall reconcile the conflicting claims of different sides of our nature by unifying them under a conception which embraces both and places them in their true relations to each other.

§ 62. *What Personality is.*

What then is human personality? We cannot answer this question by a formal definition of personality. "The mystery that belongs to it," says Green, "arises from its being the only thing or a form of the only thing that is real (so to speak) in its own right; the only thing of which the reality is not relative and derived. For this reason it can neither be defined by contrast with any co-ordinate reality, as the several forms of inner experience which it determines may be defined by contrast with each other; nor as a modification or determination of anything else. We can only know it by a reflection on it which is its own action; by analysis of the expression it has given to itself in language, literature, and the

Personality
cannot be
defined.

institutions of human life ; and by consideration of what that must be which has thus expressed itself.”¹

But its characteristics are.

But if we cannot define personality we can state its leading characteristics.

- (a) Rationally and self-consciousness.
(b) Self-determination.
(c) Love.

(a) A person is rational and self-conscious.
(b) A person is free and has the power of self-determination or free will

(c) A person is possessed of desires which irresistibly impel him into communion with other persons. A person is a member of a society of persons. His life is a life of love towards other persons

Personality is a synthetic unity

But these characteristics though separated in analysis are not separate in fact, they are faculties or functions of one individual. Human personality is a synthetic unity, that is to say, there is in it “not merely a numerical oneness, but a power of uniting opposite and alien attributes and characteristics with an intimacy which defies analysis.”² It is the organic unity which binds together a succession of mental states and makes them mine. It is not itself a perception or object added to the other contents of consciousness, but is the subject or correlate of all perceptions and objects. “These, then, are the constituent elements of personality as such—self-consciousness, the power of self-determination, and desires which irresistibly impel us into communion with other persons, or, in other words, reason, will, and love. These are three perfectly distinct and distinguishable functions, but they are united, as we have seen, by being the functions of one and the self-same subject and gain a peculiar character from this very fact. They are the thoughts of a being that wills and loves, the will of a being that loves and thinks, the love of a being that

¹ Green : *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 104.

² J. R. Illingworth : *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 29.

thinks and wills; and each attribute may be said to express the whole being, therefore, in terms of that attribute."¹

§ 63. *Resulting Tests of Right Conduct*

From these characteristics of personality, we may deduce the principal tests of right action Hence we deduce rules of right conduct.

(a) Because the personal self is rational, right action, as Kant says, will be perfectly rational and consistent. (a) It should be rational
It will satisfy the formulæ for right conduct given by Kant.

(b) Because the personal self has the power of self determination right actions will consist not, as Kant thinks, in ignoring our feelings and our objects of desire, but in controlling our feelings and in choosing our objects of desire, according to the guidance of reason. (b) It should proceed from choice between and control of our desires.
For reason, as we have maintained, shows us that there are different degrees of excellence in our feelings and our objects of desire, and that we ought to choose those of highest excellence.

(c) Because the life of the personal self is impelled by its desires into communion with other persons and can only rest satisfied in other persons. all right actions will be animated by the feeling of love toward other persons. (c) It should be animated by love.

We may also take the following as auxiliary tests of right conduct:

(d) It may reasonably be maintained that a perfect person living in the society of perfect persons would be entirely happy, and that his action would be such as would bring complete happiness to himself and to all other persons. Thus we may accept the utilitarian standard as a subordinate test of right action, and we (d) It will tend to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

¹ J. R. Illingworth: *Personality, Human and Divine*, pp. 38, 39.

may say that under normal conditions conduct tends to be right according as it aims at promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

(c) It will tend to promote individual and social health

(e) Lastly, it may be reasonably maintained, that, under normal conditions, the life of a perfect person living here in this world in the society of perfect persons would be in itself excellent, and would be prolonged as far as physical conditions permitted, and we may say that under normal conditions conduct tends to be right according as it aims at promoting and tends to promote the life of the individual person and the healthy life of society in general.

Mediating effect of this conception.

Thus we see how the conception of the standard as the ideal of personality embraces and finds room within itself for conflicting theories and mediates between them. The Rationalist is wrong, not in asserting reasonableness to be a mark of right conduct, but in excluding from the moral idea all other content whatsoever. The Utilitarian is wrong, not in saying that utility is a quality of right action, but in regarding it as including all that right conduct means. The Hedonist is wrong, not in attributing pleasure and health to the moral life, but in assuming that these are the end and the ultimate test of right action. The ethics of personality proves its superiority to these by being content with no such imperfect theories, and by effecting a work of reconciliation and unification which is the mark of a true philosophy.

§ 54. *Tests of Rightness and the Essence of Rightness.*

Importance of the distinction between tests of rightness and the essence of rightness.

This will serve to explain a very important distinction. We should be careful to notice that the questions, 'what is the moral standard?' 'why is this action right?' may be answered in two ways. They may be answered

by pointing out what the essence of rightness is, or they may be answered by pointing to some mark or feature which constantly distinguishes all right action, and which will therefore serve as a test of right action. Much confusion has been caused by not carefully distinguishing between these two things, and we have seen how mistaken theories of the right arise from mistaking some one particular mark or quality of a right action for the essence of rightness itself. Thus in all ethical theories there is truth, but no theory can be called a true theory which considers a particular result or quality of right action to be a complete explanation of the essence of rightness itself.

§ 65. *Relative Rightness and Absolute Rightness.*

In speaking of the rightness of an action we may distinguish relative rightness and absolute rightness. If an agent does what he thinks to be his duty, having done all that he could to ascertain his duty, the action is right relatively to the agent and may be said to have relative rightness, since the agent willed to do what was right. But the agent may be honestly mistaken as to his duty and the act in itself wrong. It may not be the act which a perfect moral agent would have done under the circumstances. The right act which the perfect moral agent would have willed would have been right in itself, that is, it would be said to have absolute rightness.

Relative rightness to be distinguished from absolute rightness.

The standard of relative rightness is the conscience of the agent, or, if he is capable of analysing his conscience, the moral reason of the agent. The standard of absolute rightness is perfect moral reason, the moral reason of an ideally perfect person.

§ 66. *Subjective Rightness and Objective Rightness.*

Distinction
between sub-
jective rightness
and objective
rightness

We must also distinguish between subjective and objective rightness. The term right is primarily applied to persons, if a person wills what is right he is said to be right. The rightness of the person who wills is subjective rightness. But it appears that a person is right in his willing if the object which he chooses is right; thus there is a rightness in the object of choice, and this may be called objective rightness. It might, however, be better to restrict the words right and rightness to subjective rightness, and to use the word goodness or moral goodness to denote objective rightness; a person would then be said to be right when the object of his choice is morally good.

§ 67. *Is there a Moral Standard?*

The existence of
a moral standard
questioned both
by hedonists
and by extreme
intuitional
philosophers.

The discussion as to what the moral standard is has proceeded on the assumption that there is a moral standard. But it may be necessary to justify this assumption. Some thinkers are inclined to doubt the existence of an objective moral standard or moral criterion, and arrest us with the question, "Is there a moral standard?" We understand this question to ask in effect whether there is an absolute and objective moral standard independent of my personal likings and prejudices and idiosyncracies, or whether my preference, or grounds of morality, for certain kinds of action is not rather an individual peculiarity which may or may not be shared by others. Certain ethical writers, such as Bentham, have maintained that there is no fixed standard or rule by which actions are judged to be right or wrong; every man's conscience, they say, judges of actions according to his individual likings and prejudices,

and these likings and prejudices are the only standard of the moral judgment. Such a position practically amounts to a denial of the existence of any moral standard at all. A standard should be fixed and unalterable, but personal likings and prejudices are variable and uncertain. If, then, these form the ground of our judgments about right and wrong, it is idle to talk of a moral standard.

The same conclusion is also reached by a logical deduction from the extreme theory of perceptual intuitionism. If the moral standard is taken to be conscience acting intuitively on particular cases without reference to general principles, it cannot properly be spoken of as a moral standard at all. For if a standard does anything, it lays down general principles which may be particularly applied. Thus while the hedonist substitutes individual likings and prejudices for the objective moral standard, the extreme perceptual intuitionist substitutes for it particular intuitions of the individual conscience.

But it is difficult to see how the denial of an objective moral standard can be seriously maintained, for the denial flatly contradicts our whole moral experience. As against Bentham it is reasonable to ask whether it is a fact that my conscience is guided in its judgments purely, or even mainly, by my private likings and prejudices; whether it is not of the very essence of our moral experience that conscience constrains us to do what we do not like; and whether it is not a natural assumption that all men's consciences are alike in the same sense that their intellects are alike, and that the moral standard is as absolute and objective as the multiplication table. ^{These objections criticised} These questions will receive fuller treatment when we come to consider the nature of moral

obligation. As against the extreme intuitional view it may also be urged that a moral judgment is by its nature a general proposition. "Moral judgment does not result from comparison of individual objects, but from comparison of particular acts or series of actions with a general truth, acknowledged as an imperative of rational life. Every recognition of moral quality in conduct implies use of a general notion, by reference to which an action is judged. . . . Every accurate moral judgment affirms a particular application of a universal moral truth. It contains a principle valid as a law of activity, not only in the particular case, but in all similar cases, not only at this time, but at all times, . . . a principle whose validity is in its own nature."¹

¹Calderwood: *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, pp 39, 40.

CHAPTER VI.

SPRINGS OF ACTION.

§ 68. *Theory as to Ethical Value of Springs of Action*

WE have said that the rightness or wrongness of an act depends upon its motive, that its motive is the desire chosen by the agent; and that the desire includes the idea or conception of a course of action with its result, so far as foreseen, and the impulsive feeling which arises in the mind, so far as it contemplates the course of action and the result as desirable. But it has been maintained by an important school of English moralists that the proper objects of the moral judgment are the springs of action and not the foreseen consequences of action. According to this theory we are to exclude from the motive the conception of the action and its results, and to regard the impulsive feeling as the essential element in the motive, and therefore as the real object of the moral judgment, or that which we speak of as right or wrong.

Theory that the primary motives are in pulses which prompt action blindly by way of instinct

In the actions of animals the most important part is played by instinct. Instinctive actions are actions prompted by impulsive feelings which urge the animal into action without any foresight of the consequences. And in human action, according to this school of moral

ists, the primary motives of action are impulsive feelings which involve no rational foresight, and which urge us to act in the way of unreflecting instinct.

and that these are properly the objects of the moral judgment.

These impulses are the primary springs of action. It is these impulses which we properly call right or wrong. And the duty of moral philosophy according to these ethical writers is to enumerate these impulses and arrange them in the order of their moral worth.

This view of moral philosophy has, in modern times, been expounded with great vigour and eloquence by Dr. Martineau in his *Types of Ethical Theory*. We shall, therefore, in our discussion of the springs of action, follow Dr. Martineau as closely as possible.

§ 69 *Classification of the Springs of Action.*

Various classifications of springs of action have been adopted by ancient and modern philosophers.

Plato and Aristotle

(A) Plato classified the sources of action into desires, spirited feelings, and reason, reason being the highest. This arrangement when enlarged and subdivided by Aristotle became a long list of impulses, each of which was conceived to have a best state which was a mean fixed by reason between two wrong extremes.

These classifications are open to the following criticisms. (1) In the threefold classification given by Plato there seems to be very little difference between the spirited element and desire. In fact, the spirited element is only introduced by Plato for the purpose of maintaining the analogy between the parts of the soul and the division of the state into philosophers, soldiers, and common people. (2) Aristotle's list of impulses seems to have been picked up haphazard, and we cannot be sure whether it is intended to be complete.

(B) Descartes, Malebranche, and Spinoza all discuss the affections and passions, and conceive that the perfect character consists in their due subordination. In particular, Malebranche says that love for the law of the order of the impulses is equivalent to virtue; and Descartes and Spinoza give a list of primary affections arranged in the following order: Wonder, love, hate, desire, joy, grief. Descartes,
Malebranche
and Spinoza

This view may be thus criticised:

(1) These philosophers are right in supposing that the perfect character would display a due subordination of impulses.

(2) They are also right in believing that there should be some arrangement of impulses in order of degree of excellence.

(3) But their proposed classification is imperfect. It is a medley of real instincts and of abstract qualities, virtues and vices.

(C) The English 18th century philosophers proceed in reaction against Hobbes who tried to reduce all the springs of action to forms of self-love. This led his opponents to classify all the springs of action under only two heads,—self-love and benevolence. On such a classification we need only remark that it is quite artificial and inadequate. English 18th
century philo-
sophers

(D) Reid distributed active impulses into mechanical, animal and rational; and Stewart into appetites, desires, affections, self-love and conscience. Reid and
Stewart.

But (1) the words mechanical, animal and rational in Reid's list have to be used with great latitude to include all our impulses; "mechanical" cannot properly be applied to any of them.

(2) Stewart's classification is the foundation of those given by Calderwood and Martineau and is open to the

same criticism. He does not make much use of these distinctions.

Calderwood

(E) Calderwood¹ divides impulses into three classes,—desires, affections and judgments. To these he adds a class of feelings which are not impulses to action but are rather restraints upon action, and these he calls emotions.

Desires are craving powers, impelling us to draw into our possession what is fitted to give satisfaction. A desire involves three things,—consciousness of want, consequent restlessness of nature, and longing for satisfaction. Appetites are a class of desires belonging to physical existence.

Affections are giving powers, inclination towards others, disposing us to give from our own resources what may influence them either for good or ill. Practically, affections are the reverse of desires. Desires absorb; affections give out. Affections take the form of love or hate, and reverence or pity.

Judgments are persuading powers. They are of two classes;—judgments of prudence and judgments of rectitude. They do not simply and of themselves perform the function of impulse, but they have associated with them certain dispositions or feelings whose impelling force operates with the judgments. These dispositions or feelings are desire of personal advantage and reverence for moral law. Without the judgment the true feelings are not experienced. The judgments are, therefore, the origin of the impelling force, though in themselves they are not impulsive.

Emotion is agitation of feeling attended by physical disturbance, and always implies a sense of excitement. Of the emotions the chief are wonder, grief and fear.

¹ *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, vol. 139-169.

They differ completely from desires. Desires are movements towards their objects, emotions are movements from their object. Desires crave satisfaction; emotions shun injury.

We may remark on Calderwood's classification of the impulses that it is merely a more elaborate version of Stewart's, and it will be open to the objection which we shall urge generally against such accounts of our motives. Meanwhile we may observe that Calderwood, like Stewart, makes very little use of these distinctions, his theory being that rightness or wrongness depends upon certain laws of right conduct which are prescribed by conscience or moral reason.

§ 70. *Martineau on the Springs of Action.*

The most elaborate account of the springs of action, and of right conduct as depending on the relative moral worths of the springs of action, is given by Dr. Martineau.¹

Dr. Martineau's account of the matter may be summarised as follows :—

(1) He first of all brings forward arguments to show that we are subject to impulses involving no rational foresight, and that they urge us to act in the way of unreflecting instinct.

His proof that our primary motives are impulses.

(a) He argues that if we are never impelled to certain objects without rational foresight, then we must always act in order to gain some pleasure which we clearly fore-know. We must, therefore, know the pleasure before we act, and hence the pleasure must in the first place have come to us of its own accord by accident. This seems incredible. We do not wait to act till some pleasures have been flung at us to wake us up; but we

¹ Martineau, *on the Springs of Action*, Part II. Bk. I. chapters 5 and 6.

rather act first and find our acts to be pleasant or painful afterwards

(b) That these impulses urge us to act in the way of unreflecting instinct, is evident from analogy. We see that animals have instincts impelling them without foresight to perform certain actions which secure their life and welfare. In respect of the primary conditions of life and welfare man is exactly like the animals. Hence it would needlessly break the analogy between man and the rest of the animal creation if we were to say that no human action is due to instinctive impulse.

His classification of springs of action.

(2) He then proceeds to give a psychological classification of the radical impulses of human nature. He distinguishes between two great sets of impulses,—the primary, which urge us on to instinctive action without foresight, and the secondary, which are the primary impulses transformed and made interested by self-consciousness. A secondary impulse is desire for the pleasure experienced in gratifying a primary impulse, and consequently desire to gratify the primary impulse as a means to that pleasure.

The psychological classification of the springs of action is as follows :—

(a) Primary springs of action :—

Primary impulses.

i. *Propensions*.—Vital forces correlated loosely with external conditions, carrying us simply out of ourselves. They are the organic appetites for food and sex, and animal spontaneity.

ii. *Passions*.—Repulsions from certain correlated things or causes. They are antipathy to the present, unreflecting anger at the past, instinctive fear for the future. So far the impulses are properly impersonal.

iii. *Affections*.—Attractions towards congenial correlated persons. They are the parental affection to the

child, as the image (specially for the father), and continuation (specially for the mother), of the parent's existence; the social affections towards those who resemble us with certain interesting variations: and the affection of compassion for the sufferings of others.

iv. *Sentiments*.---Aspirations to what is higher than ourselves. They are wonder, the primitive intellectual impulse asking for hidden casualty; admiration, paying instinctive homage to the beautiful; and reverence, the glad and hopeful leaping up of the mind towards transcendent goodness revealed in visible saints and heroes or in the invisible God of faith.

(b) Secondary springs of action:—

Secondary impulses

i. *Secondary propensities*.—When the appetites pass into the self-conscious state, we have the love of pleasure. Excessive love of gratifying the appetite for food becomes gluttony or drunkenness, and excessive love of gratifying the sexual appetite becomes lust. Animal spontaneity becomes transformed into the love of exercise and the love of power. The love of power and the love of pleasure combined develop into love of money.

ii. *Secondary passions*.—The passions growing self-conscious produce the very worst forms of disposition. Fondness of antipathy is malice, or, when expressed in words, censoriousness; fondness of resentment is vindictiveness; fondness of fear is suspiciousness.

iii. *Secondary affections*.—The affections, when indulged in for the sake of the pleasure they bring, degenerate into sentimentality.

iv. *Secondary sentiments*.—Wonder in its secondary form becomes the desire for self-culture which seeks the exercise of intellect for the sake of its pleasure. In the same way admiration when transformed by

self-consciousness becomes the love of art (æstheticism), and reverence becomes interest in religion.

Compound
impulses

This, according to Dr. Martineau, is the complete list of all our radical impulses. Compound impulses are formed by the combinations of these impulses aided by the laws of transference, of sympathy, and of distance.

His moral scale
of impulses.

(3) Having thus enumerated and classified the springs of human action, Martineau proceeds to arrange them in their moral order. In man, as in the animals, in instinctive impulse is the original type of activity, and in a solitary human being, or in a mind which was occupied by only one impulse at a time, no other kind of activity would arise. But with man the same occasion calls forth simultaneously two or more springs of action, and as soon as they come together we intuitively discern that one is higher than the other, and we give it a divine and authoritative preference. When the whole series of impulses has been experienced, the feeling or knowledge with ourselves of the relative rank of the impulses constitutes the developed individual conscience. Ethical science is founded on the fact that all men, when their conscience is faithfully interpreted and developed, arrive at the same series of moral estimates of the value of their different impulses.

How the moral
order arises
and becomes
known.

The moral scale.

The source of moral distinctions and terms being thus defined, we have only to compute and classify the results which follow from this doctrine. We draw up a table of springs of action, and submit pairs of conflicting springs of action to the verdict of conscience, and thus we arrive at the following list in which the springs of action are arranged in their moral order:—

LOWEST.

1. Secondary passions:—Censoriousness, vindictiveness, suspiciousness.

2. Secondary organic propensions :—Love of ease and sensual pleasure.
3. Primary organic propensions :—Appetites.
4. Primary animal propension :—Spontaneous activity.
5. Love of gain (reflective derivative from appetite).
6. Secondary affections :—Sentimentality.
7. Primary passions :—Antipathy, fear, resentment.
8. Love of power or ambition :—Love of liberty.
9. Secondary sentiments :—Love of culture.
10. Primary sentiments of wonder and admiration.
11. Primary affections, parental and social, 'with (approximately) generosity and gratitude
12. Primary affection of compassion.
13. Primary sentiment of reverence.

HIGHEST.

With the aid of this list the moral value of any action is found by the following rule of motives, or, "canon of principles." Every action is right, which in presence of a lower principle, follows a higher. every action is wrong, which in presence of a higher principle, follows a lower. In cases where a single motive can be carried out in various ways, the way to be chosen must be finally settled by the principles of prudence which considers the consequences of action.

The resulting rule of right action.

§ 71. *Criticism of Martineau.*

In criticising this theory of the springs of action we must first of all notice the errors in its psychology, and then the errors in its ethical theory proper.

(A) *Errors of Psychology.*

(1) The theory is based upon an erroneous view of the motives of human voluntary action. In voluntary action a man is never urged to act by impulsive feeling

The motives of voluntary action are not impulses but desires.

which moves him in the way of unreflective instinct. Before choosing a man reflects. And reflection converts impulse into desire. In desire impulse only appears as a subordinate and dependent feature. What is important and fundamental in desire is the way in which the man conceives of the object of desire, to what extent he regards certain actions with their probable results, as likely to satisfy the self. Upon this conception of the object of desire depend the impulsive feelings which it excites in the mind. In the second place it depends upon the will, whether the object of desire is chosen, and whether its impulsive force becomes a motive. Thus neither at the beginning nor at the conclusion of the process of deliberation, does impulsive feeling play an important part. It simply mediates between intellect and the will, and with the permission of the will may become the force which carries out the volition. It therefore seems erroneous to call the impulsive feeling the motive of voluntary human action.

The animal
analogy is not
to the point.

(2) The analogy of animal action is entirely out of place in a discussion of the nature of right and wrong. The animals have nothing to do with right and wrong because they have nothing to do with volition or reason. So far as a man allows himself to act from impulse, he acts like an animal, and his actions can have no moral quality. The only motives that ethics has to consider are the motives of voluntary actions, and these are the motives of a self-conscious, self-determining being who has as such converted his impulses into desires. Morality has nothing whatever to do with impulses except in so far as they enter into desire.

Impulse is
nothing to us
except as an
element in
desire.

(3) The absurdity of trying to regard impulses as by themselves constituting motives to voluntary human action is shown by the fact that we cannot describe them,

much less estimate them, without regarding them as elements in desires. What notions can we have of pity or fear regarded as mere impulsive feelings apart from the actions to which they impel us, and with reference to which alone they have a definite meaning for a self-conscious being? Besides, they are not simple, but are highly complex states of consciousness.

(4) These objections may be urged against any theory of the springs of action regarded as the motives of voluntary human actions. There are also special psychological objections to Dr. Martineau's account. The list is purely empirical. We are told dogmatically that there are twelve primary impulses arranged in four groups of three each, and an exactly similar number of secondary impulses. No reason is given for this fanciful arrangement. Why are there only three passions? Why is there no mention made of conjugal affection, of filial love, and so on? Moreover, Dr. Martineau's accounts of certain springs of action are peculiar to himself and would certainly not meet with general approval. This is especially the case with his account of anger, antipathy and fear, which brings into prominence the academic and theoretic nature of the whole classification.

(B) *Errors of Ethical Theory.*

(1) The psychologically erroneous conception of motive in Dr. Martineau's theory involves a parallel ethical error. There can be no doubt that in the view of common sense the ordinary consequences of an action, consequences such as an ordinary man is expected to have foreseen, have much to do with our moral judgment of that action, and that they are included under the moral judgment passed on the whole act. Dr. Martineau himself seems to have felt that such is the case for he

Special psycho-
logical errors.

Judgment on
the motive
includes some
notion of an
obligation to be
prudent in
regard to con-
sequences.

devotes a section to the proof of the proposition that prudence becomes obligatory. His proof is ingenious but fails to supply a serious defect in his ethical theory, and the admission which it makes practically nullifies the theory upon which Dr. Martineau has proceeded in his account of moral judgment.

Dr. Martineau's theory allows no place to a plan of life.

(2) Dr. Martineau's canon of principles is open to the fatal objection that it does not allow any place for the conception of an end or plan of life. Once again Dr. Martineau endeavours to anticipate the objection: "Ought we to content ourselves with treating the spring of action as our data, with which we have nothing to do but to wait till they are flung upon us by circumstances and then to follow the best that turns up? However needful it might be for us, as mere children of nature, thus to make what we could of them as gifts of surprise, have we not, now that we are aware of their relative ranks, an earlier voice in their disposal, determining whether, and in what amount, this or that among them should come at all?" In the light of these questions, Dr. Martineau admits that the hypothesis on which he has proceeded must be slightly modified, and that it lies within the province of the will not only to select between alternatives but also to predetermine to some extent what alternatives should present themselves. It is easy to remark that if such be the case Dr. Martineau's hypothesis need never have been made. It constitutes an account of moral judgment and the process of moral choice which leaves outside an element so essentially and fundamentally important to any moral estimate, as to completely disqualify any account or any hypothesis which neglects it, and Dr. Martineau seems to have totally misunderstood and under-estimated its importance. No moral philosopher therefore who regards life

as involving an end to be pursued, and the self as ordering its impulses in due subordination, and its life into a systematic whole, can accept Dr. Martineau's theory.

(3) The view of moral life which Dr. Martineau's theory involves, namely, that real moral growth should be natural and unconscious, and that self-conscious attempts to encourage this, and suppress that impulse, should be regarded as hindering the moral life, is surely paradoxical and opposed to common sense.

Moral growth is not unconscious but self-conscious

(4) It is not possible to arrange springs of action in an invariable scale of moral worth. This is specially the case with what are called mixed motives. Nor does common sense seem to hold that a higher motive below the highest is always to be preferred to a lower.

Tabulation of an invariable scale of moral worth impossible.

CHAPTER VII.

GOOD.

§ 72. *The Idea of Good in relation to the Idea of Right.*

There is in objects the unique quality of goodness.

IN discussing the question of the moral standard we have come to the conclusion that the standard of right action is the ideal of personality as discerned by moral reason. An act is right because moral reason shows that it is right. In arriving at this conclusion we have found implicit in it another conception to which the notion of right leads us, viz., the notion of good or an end of life. If, therefore, we would explicate completely the idea of a moral standard, we must advance to a treatment or explanation of the idea of good which it indicates. Thus a large number of moral philosophers would prefer to say that a person is right in his action if the object of his choice is good. This means that the object of choice, the things of this world, and of this human life, are in themselves good, or rather that they have in themselves relative degrees of goodness.

Good is the ground of duty and the standard of right action.

A person then is right if he has chosen the best object he could. Thus the good of the object is the real standard of right action. It is unreasonable, they would say, to tell a man that he ought to do what is right because it is right. You must show him that the right

act will bring good to him. That action is right which secures the highest good for man. The duty of the moral philosopher is to enquire into the nature of good and of good things, and especially of the highest good for man. When he has discovered what is the highest human good he will discover the true standard of right action. The moral law, they say, can have no authority except as guiding us to the highest human good, and right and wrong as applied to persons can have no meaning except so far as they aim or do not aim at the good. Now although this way of putting the matter does not aim at setting up the good in a sort of opposition to the supremacy of the right, it is intended to indicate the truth that to complete our notion of right it is necessary to go on to a consideration of good as that to which right action is directed. And we shall find that though goodness does not constitute a standard of rightness apart from and in opposition to rightness itself, it nevertheless puts before us another aspect of the moral standard, and completes the truth by exhibiting its rational basis.

§ 73. *What we mean by Good.*

Good is that quality or excellence in a thing which makes it, or ought to make it, an object of desire. It is a quality that admits of degrees, some things being in themselves better, more excellent, and therefore more desirable, than other things. When in deliberation a number of objects of desire are present to the mind having different degrees of excellence or goodness, we ought to choose that which has most excellence or most goodness. If we so choose our choice is right, and we are right. A right choice, like everything else, possesses goodness or excellence.

Natural good is that quality in a thing which makes it an object of right desire.

Natural good
when willed
becomes moral
good.

For the sake of the distinction we may, with Leibnitz, call the goodness of a right choice, moral goodness, and the goodness which is in things by themselves, natural goodness. Thus right, or moral good, is the right use of natural good, and natural good, when it is willed, becomes moral good.

§ 74. *The Existence of Natural Good.*

Authority and
common sense
testify to the
existence of
natural good

The existence of natural good has been maintained by nearly all great philosophers since the time of Aristotle, and it seems to be accepted by common sense. Common sense seems to agree with philosophers that an animal is of greater excellence than a stone; that a man is of greater excellence than an animal, and that the soul is of greater excellence than the body. The reason being that there is such a thing as goodness, and that goodness is found in a higher degree in some things than in other things. And we should esteem things according to their degrees of goodness, and should make our choices in accordance with this estimation.

So does the
doctrine of
evolution.

The doctrine of evolution furnishes us with a new proof of the existence of natural good. How can we say that there is progress in the world, that higher forms of life are being evolved out of lower forms of life, if we deny that there are in things comparative degrees of excellence or perfection.

§ 75. *Kant's Account of Good.*

Kant's view that
nothing can be
called good but
good will.

Kant,¹ however, has attempted to deny the existence of natural good. He recognises in pleasure a spurious natural good, but as it can have no connection with duty,

¹ *Metaphysic of Morals*, I. and II. (in Abbott's Ed. of *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 1 foll.). For a criticism of the Kantian theory, see Janet, *Theory of Morals*, Bk. I. ch. ii.

it is not a true or a genuine good. It has been said that right or moral good depends upon the choice of the will. Hence Kant has declared that the will alone is good, and that nothing can be called properly good but good will. On what condition, then, is will good? On condition that it obeys the universal law of duty. And what is this law of duty? It is a general formula of right action. So far Kant is consistently applying his fundamental principle that morality consists exclusively of the form, and not of the matter, of an action. The form of the action is its maxim, the formula of duty, the object of the action is its matter. Good, therefore, is good simply because it is obligatory, and good will is simply will obeying the general formula of right action.

i. e., will obeying the empty formula of right action;

morality consisting in the form, and not in the matter of an action.

But, when Kant comes to the further question why the will should obey the law of duty, he is driven to indicate some object which can be an end in itself. Some object, in other words, which shall explain the reason of obligation, although he has previously maintained that there is no morality in the object of will, but merely in its maxim or form. The end, then, which Kant puts before us, is good will itself, or the idea of humanity considered as an end to itself; that is to say, he gives us the inviolability of the moral personality as a fundamental reason for duty.

But Kant is driven to tacitly admit the existence of natural good

Thus Kant tacitly abandons his original position. He begins by representing will as simply a power to choose. He tells us that the will is good if exercised in conformity with the moral law. But the moral law according to Kant should be an empty form without any content. It bids us choose rationally, but it does not tell us what to choose; and the moment we come to apply it, we are struck with the impossibility of producing a concrete moral philosophy out of such an

abstract standard of right action. Kant is thus driven to indicate the ideal of humanity as a practical aim. But humanity is a natural good, and is by no means identical with the abstract conception of good will with which Kant started. Will, or the power to act according to reason, which is the subject of the moral law, is not identical with the reasonable will which is its object. Kant thus abandons his original position of empty formalism and admits the existence of a natural good.

Criticism of
Kant's original
position.

In indicating the process by which Kant was driven to make this admission we have also shown the hollowness of his original position. We may, however, criticise it further as follows:—

(a) Is duty the
principle of
good, or good
the principle of
duty?

(a) In answer to the proposition that duty is the principle of good it would be easy to maintain the opposite proposition that good is the principle of duty. "If we say of perfection, for example, or of conformity to the divine will, or of any other principle, that it is obligatory at the very instant at which it is conceived, we do not thereby make obligation the basis of good, but we derive the obligation from the good itself; for it is in proportion as perfection is good that it appears to us obligatory, not because it is obligatory that it seems to us to be good. Otherwise we should be forced to conclude that perfection, considered in itself, without reference to any will, is neither good nor evil; which would be the same as saying, for example, that God is no better than the Devil, that Ormuzd is in no way superior to Ahriman."¹

(b) Does not
moral good
presuppose
natural good?

(b) The moral good which Kant maintains to be the only true good, plainly presupposes the existence of natural good. Every human action has an object. If the object is characterless, there is no reason why certain actions should be better than certain other actions.

¹ Janet, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

(c) A good will is not always absolutely good. I may do evil with a good intention. The good intention may be morally good if it is really sincere, but nevertheless it is not absolutely and essentially good. For, though good in itself, it would not be so in so far as it worked itself out in a wrong action. "Otherwise it would be useless to enlighten mankind; for if they had only a good will, it would be of little consequence whether this good will had good or evil for its object."¹

(c) Is a good will always absolutely good?

(d) Kant's view results in a purely subjective morality. The absolute and objective character of the moral standard is lost in the individuality of the subject.

(d) This view results in a purely subjective morality;

(e) An exclusively formal morality degenerates also into an arbitrary morality. A law which is nothing but a law, which commands without reason, is always arbitrary. It was no doubt a perception of this fact which led Kant to his theory of humanity as an end unto itself.

(e) and in an arbitrary morality

§ 76. *Characteristics of Good.*

If we ask what good is, we must reply that good is an ultimate quality, and like every other ultimate quality difficult to define. We may, however, point out its chief characteristics:

Good is the harmonious development of the energies of thing.

1. In the first place, it would seem that the excellence of things may be measured by their activity or energy. Thus an animal is superior to a vegetable because it enjoys more powerful and more independent activity. Conscious existence is better than unconscious existence, because it implies greater energy, and the perfection of things increases with the number of their attributes, because their activity increases to the same extent. This is predominantly the Aristotelian conception of good.

2. In the second place, perfection implies not only activity but also order and harmony. We do not consider activities to be good which struggle with one another and destroy one another. The activities in an object which is excellent are balanced and harmonious and closely united, and the unity will be not a mere simplicity but will consist in the accord and just proportion of the activities. It will be an unity in plurality. The active forces in an animal are much more closely united with one another, and far more subtly harmonised, than those in a plant. And the same difference may be observed between a man and an animal, and between a thoughtful man and an unthinking man. This is the aspect of good especially emphasised in the Platonic and Stoic systems of philosophy.

Thus we may say that goodness or excellence involves activity and harmony, and the goodness of a thing seems to consist largely in the harmonious development of its energies or activities, and the highest goodness of a thing, or its perfection, consists in the fullest and most harmonious development of its energies.

* § 77. *Good as Cause.*

The good of a thing produces its good and its perfection.

We may also notice with Aristotle, that not only does the good of a thing consist in the harmonious development of its energies, but that the good of a thing causes its perfection, that is to say, a being becomes perfect by harmoniously developing its energies. A rider becomes a good rider, and, if possible, a perfect rider, by riding. A musician becomes a good musician, and, if possible, a perfect musician, by practising music. Similarly a brave man becomes a perfectly brave man by facing dangers. Thus it appears that the highest good of a thing both causes, and is, the perfection of the thing, and is the

most complete and most harmonious development of its activities.

§ 78. *The Scale of Being and of Good.*

Every being then has its good or excellence consisting in the harmonious development of its activities, and if it persists in what is good it tends to become perfect in its kind. But it is to be noticed that there is a scale of being, and that some beings are inferior to other beings, or, what is the same thing, that there is a scale of good, and that the good of some beings is inferior to the good of other higher beings.

Some goods are higher than other goods

The relations of beings to one another in the scale of being is not merely that the one is higher than the other, but it will be found in every case that the higher being sums up in itself the different kinds of being below it and gives them a new meaning. Thus the animal contains within itself the whole being of the vegetable completely transformed by the power of consciousness. And man contains within himself the whole being of the animal completely transformed by the power of self-consciousness and self-determination. From this it appears that the different kinds of good or excellence are not simply higher or lower in degree. The good of a higher being includes the good of all that is below it. The good of man includes the good of animal and vegetable life.

The higher good sums up and includes the lower goods,

§ 79. *Good in and for a Being.*

We may distinguish good *in* a being from good *for* a being. When we speak of good in a being we are thinking of that being by itself and of the excellence which it has, or may have, if its energies are harmoniously developed. Thus looking at a horse by itself, we might confine our attention to the good that is in it, or

Every being has good in itself, and is a good for higher beings.

may be in it if it is properly treated, that is to say, we may regard it as having in itself a certain degree of excellence which its energies may reach if they are properly trained.

But when we speak of one being as good for another being we are considering the former being in its relation to another being higher than itself. Thus a horse is a good for man. It is because there is a scale of being, and because the higher forms of being include and sum up the lower forms of being, that a lower being can become a good for a higher being.

The good of a being is good for the whole being and is the perfection of its characteristic activity.

It is, however, only a good for a higher being, that is a partial good. It is not *the* good of the being. *The* good of the being must satisfy the whole being. It can in fact be nothing else than the characteristic activity of the being, which, if persisted in, will bring the being to perfection.

§ 80. *Good as End.*

The good of a being is its end

In what sense is good an end? When we regard a being in relation to a higher being and think of it as a good for the higher being, such a good is not an end but a means. For instance, when I think of a horse in relation to a man, a horse is a good for man, but it is good not as an end but as a means. When, however, we consider any being in itself and by itself, and think of the harmonious development of its activities as *the* good of the being, we may say that, this good is the end of this being. Thus the end of the being of a horse, if we consider the horse by itself, is to be a horse and to be a good horse, and the end of the training of a horse is to make it perform the activities of a horse as perfectly as possible.

It appears then that the complete and harmonious

development of the energies of any being is not only *the* good of that being and the cause of its good, but is also the end of the being considered in itself. We may say of any living being that it has an end in itself, and that this end is its own good or excellence. The end of the life of a tree is to grow up as a tree, to manifest the energies and activities of a tree. The end of a horse is to grow up as a horse and to manifest the energies and activities characteristic of a horse.

But though these living beings may be said to have their end in themselves, they are not conscious of this end and they do not voluntarily choose it. Neither the tree nor the horse has any idea of the end of its life, much less could either of them be said to choose the end. They are made to conform to this end, by forces beyond them and above them. They do not make themselves. It is only man who is conscious more or less clearly of the end of his being. It is only man who has the power of choosing to conform or not to the true end of his being. It is only man who can make himself. Thus man as a person stands highest in the scale of being. He has, in the truest sense of the word, his end in himself. This end must be his own personal good and must cause his own personal good. It must be good for man in itself and must satisfy man's own personal nature.

This is especially true of man who alone is conscious of an end.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE END OF HUMAN LIFE.

What is the highest good for man?

WHAT then is the highest good for man? What is the end of all right action? Various answers have been given to these questions. The most common perhaps is the answer of the Hedonist.

HEDONISM.

* § 81. *General Statement of Hedonism.*

View that pleasure is the highest good.

The Hedonist maintains that pleasure is the object of all desire and the end of all action, and that the highest human good is to secure the greatest possible amount of pleasure in life. Hedonists do not, however, agree as to what pleasure is to be secured, or as to how the greatest amount of pleasure is to be calculated. The difference between Hedonists takes the form of successive differences added along a line of development of the Hedonist theory from its original statement.

§ 82. *Development of the Hedonist Theory.*

(A) *Egoistic Hedonism* maintains that the pleasure to be sought is my own greatest happiness.

(A) *Egoistic Hedonism*.—The earliest statement of Hedonism maintains that the pleasure to be aimed at is one's own pleasure. But this school again may be subdivided into (1) The Cyrenaic School who said that

the pleasure to be aimed at was the fleeting pleasure of the moment ; (2) The Epicurean School who taught that man should aim at permanent and lasting pleasure, and at mental pleasure rather than bodily pleasure. Both, however, agree that one's own pleasure is the end of all human action.

In modern times, the most important exponent of the school of Egoistic Hedonism is Hobbes, who teaches that the only object of human desire is pleasure, that the pleasure to be considered is one's own actual pleasure, and that the highest human good is to secure the greatest amount of actual pleasure for one's self. In working out this theory Hobbes finds it necessary to adopt the most paradoxical accounts of many of our most natural feelings and emotions. Such feelings, for example, as sympathy, pity, admiration, benevolence, are all regarded as forms of selfishness, for self love is, according to Hobbes, the master-key which unlocks all the secrets of our hearts.

Altruistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism — The modern school of Hedonism, while keeping to the fundamental Hedonistic postulate, offers a new definition of the pleasure which is to be sought. The standpoint is no longer the individual but society, and the pleasure to be considered as good for man is understood to include ideal pleasure as well as actual pleasure. They agree with Hobbes that originally a man desires nothing but his own pleasure and desires the greatest amount of it. But they say that a man's ideal pleasures very greatly outweigh his actual pleasures in quantity and importance, and that his ideal pleasures through the association of ideas and the working of sympathy become so involved in the pleasures of his fellowmen, that his own pleasures come to be entirely included in the happiness of the greatest number of his fellowmen. Thus the highest

(B) *Altruistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism* maintains that the highest good for man is the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

human good is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This is a statement of the general form which this doctrine assumes. There have been, however, two very important contributions to the Utilitarian theory made by J. S. Mill and Professor Sidgwick respectively:

Mill's theory
that pleasures
differ in *quali*
as well as in
quantity.

(1) Mill introduced a distinction of quality in addition to the old distinction of quantity in the gradation of pleasures. The Epicurean preference of pleasures of the mind to pleasures of the body was based, not upon any intrinsic superiority of the former, but merely upon the fact that they were more durable and enjoyed greater immunity from painful consequences. To Paley and Bentham all pleasures were essentially the same. "I hold," says Paley, "that pleasures differ in nothing but in continuance and intensity." Mill maintains, however, that there is a qualitative distinction between pleasures as real and as determined as the quantitative. He states his position thus: "There is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensations. It must be admitted, however, that Utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanence, safety, costliness, etc., of the former—that is, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature. And on all these points Utilitarians have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and as it may be called, higher ground, with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognise the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as

well as quantity, the estimation of pleasure should be supposed to depend on quantity alone. If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it in comparison of small account. Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties."¹ The theory may be briefly summarised thus: that pleasures differ in quality as well as degree, and that the test of the quality of pleasure is the verdict of the competent critic.

(2) Dr. Sidgwick endeavours to supply Hedonism with a rational foundation. Ordinary hedonist theories regard morality as "a generalisation founded on collated instances from ordinary experience as to the best means of producing the sum-total of pleasure."² Hence its method is entirely empirical. Dr. Sidgwick would

Sidgwick's
rational basis for
Utilitarianism.

¹ J. S. Mill: *Utilitarianism*, pp. 11, 12.

² Muirhead: *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 141, 142.

employ a method essentially rational. And that in two ways. In the first place, Hedonism must be based upon a *rational intuition* of right; and, in the second place, an appeal must be made from sensibility to reason, in order to provide *regulative principles* which shall produce a perfectly rational distribution of happiness. He maintains the utilitarian theory of the end, but removing it from the basis of sensibility upon which it had been supposed to rest, he places it on the basis of certain intuitions of moral reason which afford its philosophic explanation. Thus his "proof" of Utilitarianism is not psychological, as was that of Mill, but logical, inasmuch as it proceeds from self-evident axioms of moral reason. The rational basis of Utilitarianism is put forward as an intuitive apprehension of rightness which is admitted to be an ultimate and an unanalysable quality. But it is further maintained that in order to ascertain what is right we must have recourse to utilitarian calculations.

Dr. Sidgwick believes that rational intuition discovers the idea of right which is unique and unanalysable; that moral distinctions properly belong to motives which have relative moral values; that we approve of virtue not because it is useful, but because it possesses the unique quality of rightness. At the same time he is an utilitarian as to the test of right conduct and as to the means by which the end of happiness is to be attained. He does not believe that our intuition clearly shows us which of two conflicting motives is right, nor that it shows us the actual method by which happiness is to be efficaciously distributed; but holds that this concrete determination can only be effected by the canon of consequences and the rules of Utilitarianism. This constitutes Professor Sidgwick's remarkable attempt to

mediate between Intuitionism and Utilitarianism, and to unite the two into one system.¹

§ 83. *Critical Estimate of Hedonism.*

(1) Egoistic Hedonism may be dismissed as an obviously impossible account of the end of life. Besides being open to the psychological objection which may be urged against all hedonist theories, it gratuitously outrages common sense by its paradoxical accounts of our emotions and feelings. (1) *Egoistic Hedonism* gratuitously outrages common sense

(2) The fundamental error of all hedonistic theories is this, that the psychological postulate upon which they rest is entirely false. Hedonism postulates that pleasure is the only possible object of human desire.² It therefore regards man as essentially a creature of feeling. Through feeling a man is given a variety of pleasures which attract him in various degrees towards various objects. His reason has nothing to do except to discover the best way of securing the largest amount of pleasurable feeling. But this is a false view of human nature. A man's feelings, a man's desires, are not entirely *given* him. To a large extent he *makes* his feelings and he *makes* his desires for himself through the power of self-conscious reason. His feelings and desires depend upon what he is and how he regards himself and his desires. So that even if we were to admit as a matter of fact that the objects of desire which a man chooses are the objects which cause him at the time of choice the greatest amount of pleasurable feeling, this would not show that the objects are desired because of the pleasure present to the mind, but that the objects bring pleasure to the mind because they are contemplated as desirable. (2) The psychological postulate of all Hedonism is false: pleasure is not the only object of desire.

¹ Sidgwick: *Methods of Ethics*. See especially Book IV.

² Mill: *Utilitarianism*, p. 57. Cf. also pp. 6, 10.

Can transient feelings satisfy a permanent rational self?

If, however, it is said that the objects are desirable because of the pleasure they will bring in the future, we may answer that transient states of feeling can never in the end give satisfaction to a permanent rational self. It is impossible to suppose that the permanent rational self in making a choice can either contemplate any amount of future pleasure as an object which will satisfy it, or can at the moment be moved by the pleasure attaching to the idea of the object.

Thus the hedonist account of the end of human life must be rejected as based upon false psychology.

(3) The Hedonist fails to distinguish between pleasure and happiness.

(3) The Hedonist fails to distinguish between pleasure and happiness, and from the confusion between these two a greater plausibility has accrued to his theory. Pleasure applies merely to sensibility. It is the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of particular desires. Happiness is the satisfaction of the self as a whole, and may exist apart from the satisfaction of momentary desires and even in spite of the pain of failure to satisfy them. The Hedonist by identifying pleasure and happiness at the outset, and by using these terms synonymously, begs the whole question as to the adequacy of his interpretation.

(4) The Hedonist fails to give an adequate account of virtue and character.

(4) The Hedonist fails to give any adequate account of virtue and character. Virtue is resolved into prudence, character is regarded as merely instrumental, moral evil is resolved into intellectual error. J. S. Mill puts it thus: "But does the Utilitarian doctrine deny that people desire virtue, or maintain that virtue is not a thing to be desired? The very reverse. It maintains not only that virtue is to be desired, but that it is to be desired disinterestedly for itself. . . . To illustrate this farther, we may remember that virtue is not the only thing originally a means, and which, if it were not a

means to anything else, would be and remain indifferent, but which by association with what it is a means to, comes to be desired for itself, and that, too, with the utmost intensity. From being a means to happiness, it has come to be itself a principal ingredient of the individual's conception of happiness. . . . What was once desired as an instrument for the attainment of happiness, has come to be desired for its own sake. In being desired for its own sake it is, however, desired as a part of happiness. The person is made, or thinks he would be made, happy by its mere possession; and is made unhappy by failure to obtain it. . . . Those who desire virtue for its own sake desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or for both reasons united. . . . It is because of the importance to others of being able to rely absolutely on one's feeling and conduct, and to oneself of being able to rely on one's own, that the will to do right ought to be cultivated into this habitual independence. In other words, this state of the will is a means to good, not intrinsically a good; and does not contradict the doctrine that nothing is a good to human beings, but in so far as it is either itself pleasurable or a means of attaining pleasure or averting pain."¹ Surely of such a theory we must say with Green that "though excellent men have argued themselves into it, it is a doctrine which, nakedly put, offends the unsophisticated conscience."² The distinction between good and evil is a distinction of principle and not of results, an essential and not a contingent distinction. If this distinction be eliminated, morality instead of being explained is explained away. Wrong-doing would be

¹ J. S. Mill : *Utilitarianism*, pp. 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61.

² Green : *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 182.

unwise, foolish, intellectually perverse, but nothing more and nothing worse ; right action would be wise, prudent, intellectually sound, but nothing more and nothing better.

(5) The Hedonist fails to give an adequate account of obligation.

(5) The Hedonist fails to give any satisfactory account of obligation. On strictly utilitarian principles no explanation can be given of why I ought to do what is right. If pleasure is the inevitable object of desire, and therefore also the true end of human life, it cannot possibly constitute an ethical law. For, on such a supposition, the moral law is converted into a natural law, and the conception of duty and obligation evaporates in the process. If, to meet this objection, it is urged that insight into the utility of an action constitutes an inner authority to realise it in actual performance, it may still be replied that this authority must proceed from some principle of reason distinct from a principle of sensibility, and cannot therefore be admitted into a hedonistic theory. Hedonism is based on a principle of sensibility, and sensibility, being subjective and variable, cannot possibly provide for a moral obligation which is universal and objective.

(6) Practical difficulties of Hedonism.

(6) The practical application of Hedonism is beset with difficulties on all sides. The difficulties resolve themselves into two classes :

(a) As regards the individual life, on what method is the greatest amount of pleasure to be calculated?

(a) As regards the *individual life* the question arises as to the method by which the greatest amount of pleasure is to be calculated. If it is to be calculated solely with reference to differences of quantity, we may remark in the first place, that the exceedingly intricate arithmetical calculation involved cannot possibly be a process of the ordinary human intelligence ; and, in the second place, that the weight of authority and of common sense united overthrows the unnatural view that pleasures

differ only in quantity, however necessary it may be to consistent Hedonism.

If, on the other hand, Mill's innovation be accepted, the utilitarian calculus is practically abandoned. If pleasures differ in quality, the difference between them must be something other than degree of pleasure. It must be something apart from pleasure itself which gives one the superiority over the other. There is thus introduced a principle of appreciation apart from pleasure. Mill's innovation, therefore, cannot be accepted on hedonistic principles. The theory is, also, in itself unworkable. The competent critic so far as this task is concerned is an impossible fancy, and even were he to exist he could not help us. For the difference of quality among pleasures cannot on the utilitarian hypothesis be measured against differences of quantity. The "incommensurability of Mill's new element with the old,"¹ as Dr. Martineau puts it, constitutes an insuperable difficulty; and our critic could not tell us how much quality is equivalent to how much quantity.

(b) The *social* application of Hedonism is beset with even greater difficulties. Between the hedonistic principle and its altruistic application there is a logical gap which it seems impossible to bridge. Mill endeavours to bridge it thus:

(b) As regards the social application of Hedonism, how is the passage to be made from self-interest to Altruism?

"No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons."²

¹ Martineau, *op. cit.*, vol. II. p. 328

² Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

a mere fallacy
of composition.

This argument merely affords a striking illustration of the fallacy of composition, all the more striking as coming from so great a logician.

Professor Sidgwick's argument

Professor Sidgwick naturally condemns the argument, and endeavours to supply the gap by an appeal from sensibility to reason. "When, however, the Egoist puts forward, implicitly or explicitly, the proposition that his happiness or pleasure is good, not only for him but from the point of view of the universe as (*e.g.*), by saying that 'nature designed him to seek his own happiness'—it then becomes relevant to point out to him that his happiness cannot be a more important part of good, taken universally, than the equal happiness of any other person. And thus starting with his own principle, he may be brought to accept universal happiness or pleasure as that which is absolutely and without qualification good or desirable; as an end, therefore, to which the action of a reasonable agent as such ought to be directed."¹ Thus the ultimate desirableness of the general happiness is made to depend upon the dictum of rational intuition.

if logically
carried to its
conclusion
would annihilate
the Hedonistic
postulate.

On this view we may remark, that, if its implications are carried out to their logical conclusions, they would necessarily lead us to a conception of the self as essentially rational in its nature. But this annihilates the fundamental postulate of Hedonism, for "Hedonism rests upon what Mill has happily named the psychological theory of the self."² Viewed therefore as a hedonistic argument designed to bridge the gulf from Egoism to Altruism, Dr. Sidgwick's position would not be acceptable to a consistent Hedonist. We may, therefore, say that the gap in the hedonistic argument remains yet to be filled.

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 417, 418.

² See *Study of Ethical Principles*, p. 145.

We may urge yet one more fundamental objection against Hedonism, egoistic or altruistic. The practical application of the hedonistic principle, whether individually or socially, is beset by the difficulty which has been called the paradox of Hedonism, but which might as fitly be called its refutation, the difficulty, namely, that the pursuit of pleasure, or happiness, defeats its own end. "The principle of Egoistic Hedonism," says Dr. Sidgwick, "when applied with a due knowledge of the laws of human nature, is practically self-limiting," a proposition which he explains to mean "that a rational method of attaining the end at which it aims requires that we should to some extent put it out of sight, and not directly aim at it."¹ This paradox seems to put an insurmountable barrier in the way of the application of any laws of association as a means of identifying individual and social happiness, or of explaining the happiness of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice on a hedonistic basis.² Dr. Sidgwick, indeed, admits that the religious ideal of self-sacrifice is inexplicable by the principles of rational egoism: "A man cannot both wish to secure his own happiness and be willing to lose it. And yet how if willingness to lose it is the true means of securing it? . . . I must admit that a man who embraces the principle of Rational Egoism cuts himself off from the special pleasure that attends this absolute sacrifice and suppression of self. But however exquisite this may be, the pitch of emotional exaltation and refinement necessary to attain it is so comparatively rare, that it is scarcely included in men's common estimate of happiness. I do not therefore think that an important objection to Rational Egoism can be based upon its

The pursuit of pleasure defeats its own end. This 'paradox' of Hedonism is also its refutation.

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.* p. 136.

² See Martineau's *Principles*, etc., vol. II. p. 338.

incompatibility with this particular consciousness."¹ With regard to this statement it will, perhaps, be sufficient to remark that a theory of an end involves a notion of perfection, and that if an ethical theory is compelled by the logic of its own principles to leave out of account the highest attainments of human character, on the ground that "however exquisite," they are comparatively rare, that theory is manifestly inadequate, and if inadequate then certainly untrue as a theory of the end of human life.

Elements of
value in
Utilitarianism

Thus it seems impossible to accept Hedonism as a theory of the end or highest good of human life. But, none the less, it is both historically and intrinsically of great value.

1. It has done great service to ethics by insisting on the claims of sensibility to be included as an element in the total well-being of man. The ideal of asceticism, however valuable it may be for particular, and often abnormal, lives, is at best an inadequate ideal for human effort. And the stress laid by Hedonism on the importance of sensibility in the life of man has paved the way for theories of self-realisation as opposed to theories of merely negative self-suppression.

2. In the same way, Hedonism has been working towards a great and fundamental truth, the truth, namely, that even "if pleasure is not itself the good, it is its natural and normal index and expression, as pain is the natural and normal index and expression of evil."²

3. Moreover, the canon of Utilitarianism has been of immense practical benefit in inducing a juster recogni-

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

² Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 148. Cf. Carlyle: *Past and Present*, Bk. I. chap. v.: "He is to know of a truth that being miserable he has been unwise."

tion of the claims of our fellowman. "The principle embodied in the formula, that 'every one should count for one and no one for more than one' in the calculation of felicitific consequences, has been the source . . . of its real beneficence in the life of modern society' . . . It has been the source of its beneficence because, quite independently of the identification of the highest good with a greatest possible sum of pleasures—perhaps indeed . . . inconsistently with that identification—it has practically meant for Utilitarians that every human person was to be deemed an end of absolute value, as much entitled as any one else to have his well-being taken account of in considering the justifiableness of an action by which that well-being could be affected."¹ This Altruism, latent in the name utilitarian, has been the crown of Hedonism; but it is a crown which by no means sits easy on the head that wears it. We have already shown how impossible it is to bridge the gulf between Egoism and Altruism on hedonistic principles; and it therefore remains a fact that the beneficence of Hedonism springs from its inconsistency, and does not, strictly speaking, belong to Hedonism, as such, at all. But the utilitarian formula, though historically connected with the psychology of Hedonism, does not necessarily imply it, and we need not hesitate to give utilitarian philosophers their meed of praise for having worked much practical good even at the expense of consistency.

4. It has thus been in the sphere of law and politics that Utilitarianism has acted with the greatest benefit.

¹ Green: *Prolegomena*, etc., p. 226. We do not mean to say that Utilitarianism discovered this formula. It had been enunciated centuries before in the New Testament. But Utilitarianism insisted on it at a time when it well-nigh lay in abeyance, and gave it the weight of philosophic theory.

cence. Here, again, hedonistic writers have been inspired by the altruistic or democratic element in their theory as opposed to the hedonistic principle proper. But it is nevertheless certain "that, at a time when other theories by their conservatism and mysticism seemed to favour the maintenance of established abuses, the hedonistic writers brought forward an apparently simple and intelligible standard, by which the utility of laws and institutions might be estimated."¹

HEDONISM WITH EVOLUTION.

§ 84. *Statement of the Theory*

Evolutionary
Hedonists say
that the highest
good for man is
the life or health
of society

In the present day Utilitarianism has been combined with the doctrine of evolution and has been given a new, and in many ways a more rational, form. The original postulate of Hedonism is kept unchanged. "No school," says Mr. Herbert Spencer, the leading exponent of the school, "can avoid taking for the ultimate moral aim a desirable state of feeling called by whatever name—gratification, enjoyment, happiness. Pleasure somewhere, at some time, to some being or beings, is an inextinguishable element of the conception."² At the same time, the function of pleasure in life is subjected to a fresh investigation, and it is regarded as "demonstrable that there exists a primordial connexion between pleasure-giving acts and continuance or increase of life, and, by implication, between pain-giving acts and decrease or loss of life."³ From this statement it will be seen that the formula of life is somewhat altered from that of

¹ Muirhead, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

² H. Spencer: *The Data of Ethics*, p. 43. *

³ *Ib.*, p. 32. Cf. the same author's *Principles of Psychology*, 2d ed.

Utilitarianism. The highest good is not so much the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as to secure for human society the greatest amount of life, to promote the 'health' of society. 'Health' is an ethical end because life is worth living, and life is worth living because it is pleasurable. At the same time the conception of society is altered, and with it the correlative conception of the relation of the individual to his social environment. Society is not merely, as the Utilitarians thought, an aggregate of individuals each having his own 'lot' of happiness, but is to be viewed as an organism in which the connection between the individuals who compose it is not a mere mechanical coherence but an organic relation. Hence the welfare or health of the whole organism is a matter of vital moment to the individual whose own health is bound up with that of the organism. This point of view is most strongly maintained by Mr. Leslie Stephen, and may be said to characterise one branch of the evolution school. By this school morality is viewed as the outcome of the progress of society which grows both in complexity of its structure as a whole, and in the development of interdependence between its individual members. Mr. Herbert Spencer, however, is not so much concerned with the social view of evolution, and regards morality as depending in the main upon the evolution of life.

Their conception of society differs from that of the Utilitarians.

This theory of morality involves a modification in the theory of pleasure. Pleasure is viewed as depending not upon the constitution of the isolated individual, but upon the organic balance of the individual's own instincts as this is determined by his relations to the social organism, and it is regarded as produced by a double system of correlations; the due correlation of impulses in the individual, and the correlation of the

total body of individual impulses to the general organic balance of society.¹

§ 85. *Critical Estimate of Evolutionary Hedonism*

Elements of
value in this
theory

The ethical importance of the theory of evolution is very great. Its theory of pleasure, its view of society, its historical treatment of moral ideas, are distinctly valuable contributions to ethical philosophy. But we are at present concerned not with a general theory of evolution, but with the theory of Evolutionary Hedonism in particular. The theory of evolution has imparted to Hedonism additional elements of value.

(1) Its insistence on the organic character of human society has expelled individualistic theories from the field of ethics.²

(2) Its theory of pleasure has lent weight both to the altruistic element in Hedonism, and to its statement of the coincidence between pleasure and morality, and between pain and immorality, by finding for both the authority of natural laws.

Objections to it: Nevertheless, the supporters of this theory have chosen to encumber themselves with much that is open to serious objection.

(1) These theorists ignore the difference between natural and moral growth.

(1) They suppose that the development of human life resembles physical development as being the work of external forces. The circumstances which surround human beings acting upon their inherited human nature are supposed to bring about changes in their life, and it is declared that these changes, like all changes produced by evolution, are changes for the better. The new life is higher than the old life. If this were so, the growth

¹ See Leslie Stephen: *Science of Ethics*, p. 365.

² i.e. so far as speculative theory is concerned, Christianity had already achieved the task in the sphere of practical religion.

of a human being would be very much like the growth of a tree. It would be the necessary result of a certain combination of natural causes. But there is a fundamental difference between the two cases. The tree is made by natural forces, but man uses natural forces to make himself. To a large extent, what he is depends not upon the circumstances in which he is placed, but upon the use he makes of the circumstances, and this depends upon his own free will and choice. This misconception as to the nature of human life vitiates the whole account given by evolutionary Utilitarianism of the highest good of man.

(2) The theory lays itself open to all the objections which lie against Hedonism by gratuitously making the additional mistake of saying that pleasure is after all the end of life, a view which conflicts with biology as well as psychology. For biology entirely confirms the psychological analysis we have already offered in showing that impulse and desire precede the feeling of pleasure.

(2) They assume the Hedonistic postulate, and are thus open to all the objections which lie against Hedonism.

Nor does the Hedonist assumption find support in the doctrine of evolution, for it is by no means evident that increase of life, as the evolutionists understand the matter, means increase of pleasure. Mr. Leslie Stephen seems to admit this, while explaining it by a contrast between the particular case and the normal condition: "In exhorting a man to be virtuous, we really exhort him to develop his nature upon the lines which the experience of the race has conclusively proved to coincide with the general condition, both of social and individual welfare. This is to exhort him to acquire a quality of character, which, under moral conditions, and in the vast majority of particular cases will make him the happier . . . but it is also to exhort him to acquire a quality which will in many cases make him less fit than

Inconsistency of this postulate with the doctrine of evolution

the less moral man for getting the greatest amount of happiness from a given combination of circumstances."¹ But the plea that such a case is exceptional will not serve. An essential characteristic of right action must of necessity always accompany it, and if such a supposed quality be ever absent from what is supposed to be right action it follows that the two are not essentially related.

(3) They also err in their attempt to deduce moral ideas from non-moral ideas, and to explain the former by the latter.

(3) It may also be remarked that the deduction of morality from previous non-moral ideas in the course of evolution, in obedience to the formula that evolution consists in an advance from the simple and homogeneous and incoherent to the complex and highly differentiated and coherent, seems to assume nearly everything that it is required to prove. Rightness seems to the general sense of mankind to be an ultimate and unique quality of actions: it must be proved to be something different before we can accept a new view of it. The evolutionary school seems to confuse two things— an historical account of the order of appearance of things, and a rigid genetic deduction of one order of things from another.

It might be added that it does not seem very consistent in the evolutionist to be so anxious to explain a 'higher' fact by a 'lower.' The truer method would be to explain the 'lower' by the 'higher,' the seed by the flower, the child by the man. And even though

¹ Leslie Stephen: *The Science of Ethics*, p. 432. Cf. the following passage from the Epilogue to *Romola*: "We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good." (Quoted by Green, *Prolegomena*, p. 404).

moral ideas have had a history, their true import is to be read not in their meagre beginnings, but in their richest developments.

§ 86. *Rationalism.*

We have already seen how an important school of philosophers oppose the principle of sensibility by the principle of reason. Thus we found Kant maintaining that the standard of right action is the formula of good will prescribed by the moral reason asserting itself in the authoritative demands of the moral imperative. The same view reappears as a theory of the end, which is held to be unconditional obedience to this imperative. In actual practice the theory lays emphasis upon duty as opposed to inclination, and enjoins asceticism, self-conquest, the suppression of desire, as the means whereby the end of life is to be attained. In sharp antithesis to the theory that the end is pleasure for pleasure's sake, this theory maintains that the end is duty for duty's sake.¹ The arguments alleged against the acceptance of so abstract a formula as a moral standard will be equally applicable against its acceptance as a theory of the end of life. As Mr. Muirhead well says, "it fails to provide for the ordinary daily life of humanity."² And the inadequacy of a moral standard which left feeling out of account appears again as a similar inadequacy in any theory of the end which does not take account of the principle of sensibility. Reason and desire cannot be separated in the way Kant separates them. Reason constitutes desires, as we have already seen, and desires impel the rational self to activity. Hence it is not the suppression of desires, but their co-ordination, that

The theory that reason is the end of life is open to the objections urged against its acceptance as the standard of morality.

¹ See Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, Essays III. and IV.

² Muirhead, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

should be aimed at as the end of rational action. Thus we are precluded from accepting Rationalism as an adequate account of the end of human life.

Elements of
value in
Rationalism.

At the same time Rationalism is a far truer account of the end of life than Hedonism, and possesses infinitely greater value.

(1) In the first place, wisdom is a more characteristic activity of the self than sensibility, and reason rather than sensibility is the regulative principle in the life of a rational being.

(2) Moreover, Rationalism recognises rightness as distinct from expediency, and provides for a principle of moral obligation based on the nature of man as essentially rational.

(3) It lays the basis for a truer conception of human society and human personality, inasmuch as reason is at once that which binds together all men as men, and gives to each his separate dignity as man.

(4) Rationalism attains a view of life far higher and far nobler than the Hedonism which it opposes. Self-conquest is undoubtedly an element in a true theory of the end of human life, though it does not of itself constitute the whole truth. Self-development, not merely self-control, is the true destiny of the human soul;¹ but none the less must self-development begin in self-control, and morality find its germinal commencement in self-denial and self-restraint; and we cannot conceive of circumstances in which this negative element would be unnecessary and superfluous.²

¹ Cf. Illingworth, *Cathedral and University Sermons*, p. 162. "We must remember that crucifixion is a means to an end—the negative moment, so to phrase it, of our spiritual development."

² For a good account of Rationalism see Muirhead, *op. cit.*, Bk. III. chap. ii.

Thus the account given by Rationalism of the end of human life is not false, like that of Hedonism, but inadequate and incomplete. The ethics of reason, however, and, to a still greater degree, the ethics of sensibility, fail to provide an end which can be set before the whole being, the entire self. For such an end we must resort to the ethics of personality.

CHAPTER IX.

THE END OF HUMAN LIFE—(*Continued*)

PERSONALITY AS THE MORAL IDEAL.

§ 87. *General Statement of Theory.*

The highest human good is the moral ideal the ideal of human personality

FROM what we have already said as to the nature of good and perfection it will appear that the good for man must be that which will bring a man to the most complete and most harmonious use of his energies, and it will in fact consist in the most complete and most harmonious use of his energies. It will not be something for a man to get, or to keep as a possession; nor will it be a law to be carried out; it will be a life to be lived. This life will be good for man in itself, and will be good for man as a whole, for it will be the harmonious development of all man's energies. This life will be the life of human personality, for it is personality which unifies and harmonises human energies, and it is personality which characterises all human activities. The good for man is a moral ideal, and this moral ideal is the ideal of perfect human personality.

§ 88. *Personality and Individuality.*

Personality is two-fold.

Personality is twofold. In every person there is a

particular individual element and there is a common universal element ¹

(1) A man is an individual self, he has a body of his own, and with that body is given a place in the world, a particular set of experiences, a particular set of sensations, feelings, instincts, wants. All this goes to make him a particular individual and is his individuality. If a man were nothing more than this he would be a mere animal.

(2) But man is more than a mere animal, ~~he has~~ reason and conscience and will. Through his power of self-consciousness he contemplates himself as an object, and he contemplates his sensations, feelings, instincts, and impulses, as objects which must be controlled and reduced to order and made to harmonise with the character of the self. It is this self-consciousness, it is this power of grasping together the individual self, and using it to build up a stable rational character, which makes the true life, the true selfhood of man. This higher and peculiarly human selfhood is personality. It is then the essence of personality that it is a unifying activity, an activity which seizes the many feelings and impulses of the individuality, and by subordinating them to the idea of a permanent self, organises them, reduces them to unity, and makes them express a higher spiritual nature. A personal being can do this because he is self-conscious, because he is able to determine himself, because as rational he is able to discern the differences of excellence in the objects of desire of which he is conscious, and because his spiritual nature can find no satisfaction except in personal life.

Human personality does not consist in the gratification of the individual self, of the individual feelings and

¹ Cf. the scholastic aphorism, "Persona non est individuum."

impulses; nor in the suppression of the individual self, of the individual feelings and impulses; it consists in the using of the individual self to realise the higher self, the truly personal life.

§ 89. *Personality means Self-Realisation.*

The end of life is to be a true person.

Personality then is the true end of human life, and if we would sum up the law of duty in single precept or command, that command would be, "Be a true person; use your natural individuality to make the true or ideal self of personality." Man receives this command because he has a will. Therefore he is asked of his own free will to conform to the law of his being, and the law of his being is consciously conceived by him as an ideal at which he ought to aim. In the case of the beings below man there is no free will, there is no self-consciousness, there is no personality. Nature is under law, man is commanded to subject himself to law.

Man can and ought to make himself.

This explains why a man ought to subject himself to the law of his personality. Unless he does so he cannot be a person. Man has to make himself a person by conscious effort. He will not be made a person through the working of natural forces, such as those, for instance, by which a tree is made a tree. Personality is thus the fulfilment of the possibilities of the self, and 'self-realisation' consists in the continuous and constant effort to fulfil the potentialities of personality.

§ 90. *Personality implies Self-Sacrifice.*

We ought to subordinate the lower self of individuality to the higher rational self. This implies sacrifice.

If we may regard the life of personality as a life of self-realisation, we may also regard it as a life of self-sacrifice, using the word self however in a different sense. When we say that the life of personality is a life of self-realisation, we mean by the self the higher self,

the rational self, the ideal self. But when we say that the life of personality is a life of self-sacrifice, we mean by the self the lower self, the separate self, the self of particular feelings and impulses, the self with which men, unfortunately, are often far more familiar than with the higher ideal self. This makes it all the more necessary for us to insist upon the fact that true personal life means the dying of the lower separate self. A man cannot allow himself to have separate feelings, and separate impulses, which he may seek to gratify by themselves. He must take every one of these individual experiences and subordinate them to the general ideal of personal life. In this way individuality must be absorbed into personality, and the separate self as separate must die. We must "crucify the flesh" if we would live the "life of the spirit," and from the death of the lower emerges the life of the higher self. Only this "crucifixion," this "death," is not to be attained, as is sometimes supposed, by *suppression* of the lower self, but by its *subordination* to the life of the higher self.

§ 91. *Personality implies Love for other Persons.*

It is impossible for a man to stand alone. Love is essential to personality, and love implies relations with other persons. A man cannot be a person except he comes in relation to other persons; "It will plainly appear, that there are as real and the same kind of indications in human nature, that we were made for society and to do good to our fellow-creatures; as that we are intended to take care of our own life and health and private good."¹ And every person must be always and in itself, a good which is in itself the good of all persons alike; a person sees personality in every person,

"Be a person;
and respect and
love others as
persons."

¹ Butler: *Upon Human Nature*, I.

and finds satisfaction in personality in every other person. If he is to be a person, he must respect and love personality in other persons. "We are at once egoists and altruists in every moral action, each is an *ego*, and each sees in his brother an *alter ego*."¹ Thus the command "be a person" is not a selfish precept bidding us think only of ourselves. To be a person a man must love other persons, and the command "be a person" may be expanded into the fuller command, "be a person, and respect and love other persons."

"To thine own self be true
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

§ 92 *Man and Society.*

As a person, man
ought to seek
the common
good of all
persons.

The life of personality is thus that of a society or a system of beings each of whom is an end in himself. Personality unites us with our fellowmen. Individuality tends to separate us. The claims of individuality may conflict, the claims of persons never conflict. Thus a person can and ought to seek the common good of all persons, and in such good he will necessarily realise his own.²

Even as an
individual he
depends on his
society,

Even in respect of individuality a man cannot separate himself from his fellowmen. Our individuality is built up out of certain original natural feelings, impulses, and tendencies, and the intellectual and moral training which we have received during our life.

¹ Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

² We have not thought it necessary to discuss separately a theory of the end as common good. Such a theory appears to be included in the theory of personality or self-realisation unfolded in this chapter, and cannot be separately enunciated if it is to be philosophically intelligible.

This individuality connects us closely with society. The nature with which we are born we inherit, the education which we receive, the language we speak, the ideas we think, the customs we practise, are received from society. Man makes himself, but every man, even the greatest hero, can only make himself out of materials which he receives from society. Man is thus doubly connected with his fellowmen. He is connected with them through his individuality which he has received from society, and he is connected with them through his personality which places him under the obligation of using his individuality for the fulfilment of the common good of all persons.

both by inherited nature, and by intellectual and moral training.

§ 93 *Personality and Happiness.*

Is the complete and harmonious life of personality happiness? In seeking an answer to this question we may notice the following points:

Is the life of personality perfect happiness?

(a) The life of personality when it has become perfect, is not a life of struggle and repression, but is spontaneous, free, and natural. The constant subordination of activities to fixed laws and purposes will give rise to virtuous habits of action, and virtuous habits of action are definite powers of right action. Habit is second nature. The virtuous man through persisting in right action has become habitually and therefore naturally virtuous. Once he could have committed certain sins, now it would be naturally impossible for him to do so. Right action in certain directions is for him the easiest way, the natural way, we might say, the only possible way, of acting.

(a) The life of the perfect person is naturally and spontaneously good, therefore it must be happy.

(b) In the second place, happiness, though it certainly implies pleasure, is not, as the hedonists suppose, a sum of pleasures. Happiness is a feeling of the whole

(b) Happiness is not a sum of pleasures.

self as opposed to the pleasurable feeling of some one aspect of the self. Pleasure is the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of particular desires. Happiness is the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of the self as a whole.

(c) Happiness is not the end of life, but is the crown of perfect personality.

(c) It would appear then that the life of perfect personality must produce happiness, and that there must be an ultimate coincidence between happiness and perfection. Natural law and ethical justice alike make this demand, and the coincidence follows *a priori* from the notions of perfection and happiness in themselves.¹ But it would seem to be misleading to say that happiness is the "perfect life of personality. Happiness is rather the crown of perfect personality, the bloom, as Aristotle calls it, of a virtuous life.

Much less can we call happiness the end of life, for the end of life cannot be mere feeling. Moreover, unless we define happiness as the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of the true self, and affirm that happiness cannot be felt short of the satisfaction of the true self, we must admit that a man may feel entirely happy without having attained, or having nearly attained, perfect personal life.

Blessedness is better than happiness.

As Carlyle has said, blessedness is better than happiness,² understanding by happiness the feeling of self-satisfaction, which we may have when we have

¹ Cf. Butler, *Upon Human Nature*, III, *ad finem*; where, from a slightly different point of view, he says, "Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things."

² Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II. chap. ix. "There is in man a higher than love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness."

harmonised our activities by some rule of life; and by blessedness the feeling which arises when we have sacrificed an existing harmony of activities to a higher conception of life. If happiness were the end of life moral progress would be stopped.

§ 94. *Personality as the Moral Standard.*

In what sense is the ideal of personality the standard of right action? In discussing the question of the moral standard we concluded that the moral standard was the ideal of personality as discerned by moral reason, and we pointed out a number of rules grounded in moral reason which might practically serve as tests of right action. We also said that for the plain ordinary man the standard of right action was conscience, which is moral reason enriched with a number of acquired conceptions, feelings and tendencies.

(a) Theoretically personality has been shown to be the moral standard.

We found, however, that a large number of moral philosophers were not content to stop here. It was argued that reasonable action must be consciously directed towards some end. Moral reason cannot command us to act in certain ways unless it shows us some end, some good to be attained by so acting. If it did not do this moral reason would be unreasonable in its commands. We then went on further to ask, what is the end of right conduct? And the answer to which we have been led is that the end of right conduct is the ideal of human personality; and the ideal of human personality we have found to be the complete and harmonious development of human energies. It is the using of the individual self for the purpose of developing a universal personal character.

Such an account of the end of human life has been theoretically of great value, but practically it does not

(b) Practically it does not seem to be a standard which we can apply.

seem at first sight to help us much to determine in the concrete, what is right and what we ought to do. For if we ask definitely and specifically what is the ideal of human life we shall be told that it is habitual right action. So that our argument seems to have become a circle. We seem to have returned to the point from which we started.

§ 95. *Moral Life is by Faith.*

But it is part of our moral probation to believe in ideals which we cannot fully discern.

We ought not, perhaps, to be surprised that it should be so. Reflection on the nature of our moral life should show us that man is here in a state of probation. Human life here is a life of faith, not of sight. The divine mind no doubt sees with perfect clearness the ideal of human nature, and hence knows with perfect certainty what it is absolutely right for a man to do at every moment of his existence. Had man this knowledge his whole way of life would be perfectly plain before him. He would be advancing to a goal which he would always see with perfect distinctness. Under such circumstance we can hardly imagine a man taking the wrong path, and human life would no longer be a state of probation. As it is, man is not allowed to see clearly the end of his life. His life is surrounded with mystery. He is required to advance towards a goal which he cannot see, but in which he is to believe. To guide him in his advance he is given moral reason, and moral reason is limited.

Yet moral reason is sufficient guide for the duties of daily life if illuminated by faith.

Yet moral reason is sufficient. We may say with confidence that the light of reason is always sufficient to show a man his duty in the immediate present. All that is required of a man is that he shall have faith in his reason, so that he may make those right steps on the path of duty which reason shows he ought to make at

the present time, and that he shall believe that when he has made those steps his reason will again show him the further right steps which he ought to take. He must have faith in his reason, and faith in the reality of that ideal towards which his reason is guiding him. Human life is like a man walking in darkness, and reason is like a lamp which he carries with him, which shows him a limited portion of the way before him, casting upon it a limited pool of light in which he is required to walk. If he advances in that light, the lamp, advancing with him, shows him a further portion of the way, and so advancing he will in the end reach his goal. But if the man stands still, and because he cannot see the end of the way refuses to advance at all, that man is lost.

§ 96. *Butler's Theory of Nature as the End.*

The theory of Personality as the end of human life is substantially identical with Butler's view that the true end of human life is to live according to nature, to "follow nature," to do right because it is the law of our nature. But the term 'Personality' is to be preferred to the term 'Human Nature' inasmuch as it is more concrete and more accurate, and stands in need of no such qualifications as Butler is compelled to attach to the term 'Nature,' as, for instance, when he speaks of a 'higher' and a 'lower nature,' of a 'truer nature,' of a 'real nature,' of a 'real proper nature.'

The theory of Personality as the end of human life is substantially identical with Butler's theory of living according to nature - but 'personality' is a more accurate and concrete term than 'nature.'

Butler's theory is to be found in his three sermons *Upon Human Nature*, and is not easily represented by quoted extracts. But the following passages will, perhaps, serve both to indicate somewhat of his theory, and to explain the advantage of using the term 'Personality' in place of Butler's more ambiguous and abstract expression. "If by following nature were meant only acting

as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of nature as any guide in morals: nay, the very mention of deviating from nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of distinction, would absolutely have no meaning. . . . Let it, however, be observed, that though the words *human nature* are to be explained, yet the real question of this discourse is not concerning the meaning of words, any otherwise than as the explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the assertion, that *every man is naturally a law to himself, that every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it.*" This assertion is to be explained "by observing that *nature* is considered in different views, and the word used in different senses; and by showing in what view it is considered, and in what sense the word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the guide of life, that by which men are a law unto themselves." "The natural supremacy of reflection or conscience being thus established; we may from it form a distinct notion of what is meant by *human nature*, when virtue is said to consist in following it, and vice in deviating from it. As the idea of a civil constitution implies in it united strength, various subordinations, under one direction, that of the supreme authority; the different strength of each particular member of the society not coming into the idea; whereas if you leave out the subordination, the union, the one direction, you destroy and lose it: so reason, several appetites, passions, and affections, prevailing in different degrees of strength, is not that idea of a notion of *human nature*; but that *nature* consists in those several principles considered as having a natural respect to each other, in the several passions being naturally subordinate to the

superior principle of reflection or conscience. Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: add to these the superior faculty, whose office it is to adjust, manage, and preside over them, and take in this its natural superiority, and you complete the idea of human nature."

CHAPTER X

OBLIGATION AND DESERT.

What do we mean by the term "ought"?

WE have considered the nature of the distinction of right and wrong as applied to human conduct. We have also discussed the nature of human good, that is, the end of human life. There still remains a further set of questions to be discussed, the questions connected with duty or obligation. When we recognise that an action is right we further recognise that we ought to do it. The question is as to what we mean when we use the term ought. What is 'oughtness'? We shall see that 'ought' like 'right' is a notion which eludes definition, and is too simple to be defined.

§ 97. *Theories which deny Moral Obligation.*

(1) Bentham's theory that there is no such thing as obligation.

(1) According to Bentham there is really no such thing as obligation. The use of the word 'ought' is irrational. There is no law or lawgiver to constrain us to act rightly. Obligation is a mere feeling within us, and is purely subjective and personal. What we call the authority of conscience means the authority of my conscience. Bentham's position put in its most extreme form would come to this, that the "authority of conscience" means the demands of my private likings. It has, therefore, no authority even for me, beyond my

such authority as I may choose to attach to my own fancies. Bentham thus denounces all appeals to a moral faculty as sheer dogmatism.

This theory flatly contradicts our moral experience. How can the authority of conscience mean the demands of my private likings, when I myself bend and submit to its authority against my likings?

(2) The second form of this denial of the authority of conscience runs thus:—Admitting (in consequence of the foregoing criticism) that obedience to my conscience must be for me a matter of obligation and not of liking, still my conscience and the moral order of my impulses cannot bind others. For them the moral order may be quite different.

(2) Theory that obligation is purely subjective.

This too, quite contradicts our moral experience:—

(a) The moral value and rank of my desires does not depend on any peculiarity in me. It belongs to the very nature of the desires and is the same for all men.

(b) The obligation which binds me becomes dead and meaningless, if it does not similarly bind others. Obligation, felt by man in the dictates of his conscience, operates in two directions at one and the same time; it "imposes on him a duty, and invests him with a right; and to deny this reciprocity, yet hold him bound, is to retain the ghost of obligation, when you have cut away that postulate of a common human nature, which alone links it to life."¹

(c) It is the natural assumption of all men that their consciences are alike, just as their intellects are alike. Dr. Martineau well says that "the supposition of 'subjective' morals is no less absurd than that of 'subjective' mathematics."

¹ Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II, p. 102.
vol. II, p. 103.

Lastly, to the general position it may be replied that if obligation is not an illusion, if our conscience and its testimony are to be trusted as our other faculties are, obligation cannot be purely subjective. It cannot depend on any individual consciousness, it must bind all alike.

§ 98. *Theory which admit but mistake Obligation*

Other philosophers admit obligation but explain it erroneously as

On the other hand there are a large number of moralists who admit that obligation is something more than a mere feeling in the mind, and that it is a real relation subsisting between real objects. But they give erroneous accounts of the two terms between which obligation subsists, and so they give an erroneous account of the nature of moral obligation itself.

(1) a relation subsisting between the whole and the part—e.g., the

(1) It has been said, for instance, that the moral law is invested with the authority of the whole over the part, and that obligation arises from the fact that self-realisation implies the conscious attachment of the individual self to the infinite all-embracing whole.

This view, which is put forth by Goethe, explains moral obligation to be the relation which subsists between the whole and the part. Man is told that he ought to strive to be a whole, or rather to strive to live in the infinite all-embracing whole.

It does not appear at all clear why the whole should have authority over the part. The whole is of course larger than the part, but why should authority arise out of mere largeness? Mere excess of bulk can at best mean greater power, not greater authority. Consciousness of lesser power may produce a feeling of compulsion but not a sense of obligation, in relation to the greater power.

(2) It has been said, again, that the moral law is invested with the authority of life in its completeness over the momentary interest.

(2) a relation subsisting between partial and complete views of life—e.g., Mr. Herbert Spencer.

This view, which is put forth by Herbert Spencer, explains moral obligation to be the relation which subsists between partial and momentary views and the widest views of life. The widest views are always more conducive to life. Thus the idea of saving and storing up food is more conducive to life than the immediate desire to consume food, and a far sighted consideration for the good of society is more conducive to welfare than the short-sighted policy of stealing. Guidance by the widest views in the long run conduces to welfare and therefore has the higher authority.

This view misses the idea of moral authority altogether. It only shows that guidance by the widest view of life is more prudent. The violation of moral obligation, in this sense of the term, could only be regarded as a blunder, it could not be spoken of as a sin, it would be imprudent, but not immoral. And obligation, so regarded, is merely an obligation to be long-sighted and thrifty, not an obligation to be virtuous and good.

(3) It has also been maintained that the moral law is invested with the authority of society over the individual.

(3) a relation which subsists between society and the individual—e.g., Mr.

This view, which is put forth by Mr. Leslie Stephen, explains moral obligation to be the relation which subsists between society and the individual. Man is told that he ought to reverence the welfare of society, society being an organism in which the usefulness and welfare of the members depend upon the whole and its welfare.

If this theory were regarded by its exponents as a partial but incomplete statement it might be taken as true so far as it goes. There are teleological implications in the notions of society which would carry the idea of

obligation on to its proper meaning. But if the obligation to society is regarded merely as the superior strength of our social feelings, the notion of obligation to a supreme moral authority is completely missed.

§ 99. *Sidgwick's Account of Obligation.*

Professor Sidgwick's account of obligation, as unique, ultimate and objectively valid.

A very much better account of moral obligation is given by Dr. Sidgwick, who says that moral obligation does not signify a mere subjective feeling, nor that certain rules of conduct are supported by external sanctions or prescribed under penalties, and declares that the notion is too elementary to be defined and must be taken as ultimate and unanalysable. We can only say that there is such an obligation imposed upon us, and that though the obligation is in a sense individual, since I ought to do only what I can do, yet the obligation is also objective, that is, "that what I judge 'right' or 'what ought to be' must, unless I am in error, be thought to be so by all rational beings who judge truly of the matter."¹

He does not tell us the terms between which the relation subsists.

Dr. Sidgwick seems to be correct in saying that obligation is not a mere feeling in the mind, but that it is an unique and objective relation. And there is nothing in his account which seems to be contrary to fact. But it is not complete. He does not tell us the two terms between which the relation subsists. One of these terms is evidently the human self which feels the obligation. The question is, what is the nature of the second term? To whom is the obligation due?"²

§ 100. *To whom is Obligation due?*

Is obligation due to the ideal of humanity?

We have said that the end of life is the ideal of human personality, or the ideal of humanity. Can we

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, Bk. I. ch. III. par. 23.

then say that the obligation is due to this ideal? In a certain sense doubtless we can. The ideal of humanity is in a sense a binding moral authority. But obligation is not due to the ideal of humanity as an abstraction. A mere abstraction cannot claim allegiance from us. Not until it is invested with a realistic interpretation does it have any power over us. Obligation is thus due to the ideal of humanity as actually found in a real person other than the man who owes the obligation. Without a second person in whom the ideal of humanity may be found actually realised no obligation could arise. Obligation is therefore a relation between persons, and the 'other' term in the relation besides ourselves must be some higher person. This may be shown as follows.

Yes: in so far as this is conceived as a real person.

Dr. Martineau has well argued that an absolutely isolated person could not be subject to obligation.¹ He takes two cases—

An isolated person could not be subject to obligation.

(1) Assume that this absolutely isolated person's pleasures differ only in *quantity*. Then how can there be any obligation for him to prefer, let us say, the love of intellectual pleasure to the love of sensual pleasure? Between whom does it subsist?

(a) Does one of the motives owe obligation to the other? Obviously obligation cannot subsist between two phenomena.

(b) Does he owe obligation to himself? Clearly the same self cannot at the same moment impose and owe the obligation; and there are here not two selves but two phenomenal states of the same self (viz., the self inclining to intellectual pleasure, and the same self inclining to sensual pleasure). Between these obligation cannot subsist.

¹ Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II. pp. 107, foll.

(c) Does he owe the obligation to his true or higher self? The only test which an absolutely isolated being can have of his true character must be his general tendency during the past. If we say that he ought to choose intellectual pleasure because this accords with his true character, we must mean that he ought because his general tendency has been to choose intellectual pleasure, and this must be because he finds a greater quantity of enjoyment in it. Such an explanation does not help us, for such prudential considerations cannot give rise to obligation.

(2) Assume that his pleasure differs in *quality* as well as *quantity*. Will there be now any obligation to take the more refined pleasure? No, for to whom can this obligation be due? You can simply say that he will show bad taste if he chooses the coarser pleasure. As long as we merely attribute to his impulses subjective differences of quality depending on his own consciousness there can be no authority. It is not till we attribute to them differences of preference in the estimation of another person higher than he is, that obligation can arise for him.

Obligation
ultimately
due to God.

It would seem then to result from what we have said that obligation is an unique and objective relation subsisting between two persons of whom one is higher in moral worth than the other, the higher person claiming the obligation in so far as he actually embodies the ideal of humanity. Thus in the end all obligation is due to God. Dr. Martineau puts the matter well. "If I rightly interpret this sentiment, I cannot, therefore, stop within my own limits, but am irresistibly carried on to the recognition of another than I." Nor does that 'other' remain without further witness: the predicate 'higher than I' takes me yet a step beyond; for what

am I? A person: 'higher' than whom no thing assuredly--no mere phenomenon--can be; but only another person, greater and higher and of deeper insight."¹

We know no other person but God to whom this sentiment would point. Thus the idea of obligation if it is to be explained and not explained away leads us to the idea of God to whom obligation is due, because He contains in Himself the sum of all perfections, and must actually have that group of perfections which will constitute the ideal of human nature. The ideal of personality is thus seen to be a Personal God Who is, by virtue of His very nature, an eternal law of righteousness to all persons, and the end of human life is from this new point of view seen to lie in conformity to the moral perfection which is the source of our moral ideal.

Thus the ultimate rule for the moral life is the nature of God, and the ideal for man is nothing less than the Divine Perfection, in so far as it has been revealed or communicated to man. But two further points must be noticed. In the first place, moral obligation does not arise merely from the contemplation of an example. It arises from the fact that the perfect and infinite personal God stands in intimate and indissoluble relation to ourselves, and we to Him. It is because God loves mankind that the perfection of the divine nature, in so far as man can see it, is a law to man, and the obligation to do right an obligation due to God. In the second place, the moral law is not merely an arbitrary command addressed to the individual will, the violation of which is an outrage against love. It is the necessary and ultimate expression of the divine wisdom; it embodies a principle of the working of the divine wisdom itself;

¹ Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II. p. 104.

and it is obligatory because by it alone can the will of man be brought into harmony with the will of God, which harmony is an end adopted both by human reason, and by human consciousness of the divine love as affording the goal, of human endeavour.

Summary of the argument.

The whole argument may be summarised thus : "Man is conscious of an imperative obligation upon his conduct. It is not a physical necessity, disguised in any shape or form, for he is also conscious of being free either to accept or decline it. It cannot originate within him, for he has no power to unmake it; and it accomplishes purposes which its agent does not at the time foresee—results to himself and others which he can recognise afterwards as rational, but which his own individual reason could never have designed. It cannot be the voice of other men, though human law may give it partial utterance; for it speaks to his motives, which no law can fathom, and calls him to attainments which no law can reach. Yet with all its independence of human authorship it has the notes of personality about it. It commands our will with an authority which we can only attribute to a conscious will. It constrains us to modes of action which are not of our own seeking, yet which issue in results that only reason could have planned. It educates our character with a nicety of influence irresistibly suggestive of paternal care. The philosophers who have proved it, the saints and heroes who have obeyed and loved it, the sinners who have defied it, are agreed in this. And the inevitable inference must be that it is the voice of a Personal God."¹

¹ Illingworth: *Personality, Human and Divine*, pp. 110, 111.

§ 401. *The Theory of Divine Authority completes Inadequate Theories.*

(1) From these considerations we may see how far it is true to say that the moral law is invested with the authority of humanity as the ideal type over particular men.

Thus we may see how far and in what sense it is true to say (1) that moral authority is the authority of ideal humanity over particular men;

This view explains moral obligation to be the relation which subsists between the individual man and the ideal of his nature. Thus Richard Rothe says that such a man in trying to be his true self must conform to the ideal of humanity, and Kant more generally says that every rational being must make his will conform to the idea of the universal will of rational being.

Such views are not altogether fanciful. It is correct to say that a man ought to respect the ideal of his own nature. But we must further add, to complete these views,—

(a) that this ideal is not the average type of character which we find in the majority of men, but an exalted type of character to which men very seldom, if ever, approximate;

(b) that this ideal is not a mere generalisation of a group of perfections which cannot be found in any real person, but is actually realised in the infinite perfections of the divine nature; it is a portion of the actual character of God revealed to man as the ideal of his possible perfection.¹ The authority of the typical humanity is the authority of the divine standard of duty revealed to man.

¹It would be a reasonable question to ask, 'how revealed?' As Christians we should reply, "both naturally in the constitution of man, and historically in the person of Jesus Christ."

(2) that it is imposed by a man on himself,

(2) We also see that to a certain extent Green is right in saying that "it is the very essence of moral duty to be imposed by a man on himself."¹ By this Green means that the obligation which binds us is not alien to our nature. Men usually think of the moral law as a set of commands proceeding from a being who is different from us and who arbitrarily imposes them upon us. But the moral law is the law of our own nature, the law according to which our nature must grow in seeking its own good, and its obligation consists in this very fact. Moreover, the divine being who imposes the law does not remain without us. He enters into our very life. He is the spirit of our humanity which sets before us the ideal of a perfect life, and pronounces obedience to duty to be necessary for its realisation. In this way it may be said that duty is imposed upon a man by himself, because it arises from his idea of an absolute perfection to be realised in and by him, and this idea is part of his conscious life in communion with God.

(3) that it is the authority of society over the individual.

(3) Lastly, we may even admit much truth in Mr. Leslie Stephen's contention that the moral law is invested with the authority of society over the individual. But to complete this view we may point out that society being an organism implies an organiser, viz., God (its necessary teleological implication), and that we ought to reverence the welfare of society because we ought to reverence the will of God which is expressed in the social organism: Moreover, it is only on a basis of personality that society can be constructed and explained; and if by the 'authority of society' is meant the obligation to conform to the laws of personal life, the phrase at once acquires a meaning both adequate and intelligible.

¹ Green: *Prolegomena*, p. 352.

§ 102. *Paley's Account of Obligation.*

Before leaving the question of moral obligation it will be necessary to consider Paley's account of the matter. Paley says that moral consciousness, that is, the dictates of reason and conscience, will not account for moral obligation. Moral consciousness is a mere subjective feeling. We may despise conscience and disregard the dictates of reason. Moral obligation is not due to the existence of moral consciousness at all. It is maintained solely by the hope of heaven and fear of hell.

Paley's account of obligation is subjective and due to the hope of heaven or fear of hell.

(1) Paley mistakes the issue. The controversy is not between the authority of a set of pleasures and pains due to heaven and hell and the authority of a set of subjective feelings, but the controversy is between the authority of a set of sentient pleasures and pains and the authority of the same pleasures and pains when regarded as fulfilling the judgments pronounced by our conscience. Those who believe that moral authority belongs to conscience may avail themselves of heaven and hell as a support of authority, but they prefer first to appeal to conscience.

(2) The pleasures of heaven and the pains of hell have no authority in themselves; whatever authority they have comes to them as fulfilling the verdicts of conscience and is due to conscience.

(3) Paley's account is self-contradictory. He supposes a man to have moral feeling and yet not to feel it. All he can mean is that if we do not believe in future rewards and punishments, conscience will be curtailed of its adequate supports.

If there is a moral faculty, conscience, it has authority and it can do its work. There is no more reason for

distrusting its testimony than there is for distrusting our other faculties.

§ 103. *Sanction of Morality.*

What is meant by "sanctions of morality."

The consideration of Paley's account of moral obligation seems to lead naturally to the consideration of what are called the sanctions of morality.

By the sanction of a legal enactment a lawyer means the penalty attached to any infringement of it. By the sanctions of the moral law the moral philosopher means the happy consequences which will reward obedience to the moral law, and the unhappy consequences which will punish disobedience.

In this sense we have five sorts of sanctions of morality :—

(1) Natural or physical sanction,

(1) *The Natural or Physical Sanction.*—By this is meant the physical pleasures which follow right conduct, and the physical pains which follow wrong conduct. For instance, temperance keeps the body healthy, whereas intemperance produces pain and disease.

(2) Political or legal sanction,

(2) *The Political or Legal Sanction.*—By this is meant the rewards which are given by law to right conduct, and more especially the punishment inflicted on wrong-doers.

(3) Social sanction,

(3) *The Social Sanction.*—By this we mean the esteem, the approbation, and the gratitude of our fellowmen which reward right conduct in society, and the disgrace and disapprobation of our fellowmen which punish wrong conduct in society.

(4) Moral sanction,

(4) *The Moral Sanction.*—By this is meant the self-esteem, the inward peace of mind, which rewards right conduct, and the remorse which punishes wrong conduct.

(5) Religious sanction,

(5) *The Religious Sanction.*—By this is meant the future heavenly rewards which God will give to the righteous,

and the future punishment and condemnation in hell which await the unrighteous.

The criticism which has been applied to Paley will apply to all interpretations of the sanctions of morality as sources of moral obligation. We do not deny that these sanctions exist, but we affirm that they cannot possibly account for moral obligation, though they may strengthen and enforce the feeling of obligation when it exists. The happy or unhappy consequences of action, whether physical or mental, earthly or heavenly, cannot in themselves be regarded as rewards or punishments. They are merely consequences. They only come to be regarded as rewards or punishments when they are recognised as enforcing the verdict of conscience or moral reason. Thus the authority in which these so-called "sanctions" clothe themselves is entirely the gift of the moral consciousness.

Criticism of
the theory of
sanctions.

In the second place, right acts done in the hope of reward or out of fear of punishment would not be morally right at all. They would not show that the person who did them was right, they would only show that he was prudent. Mr. Muirhead has happily remarked that "to any but the Hedonist the phrase 'sanctions of morality' is suspiciously like a contradiction in terms."¹

§ 104. *Duty to God and Duty to Man.*

It appears then that all men are under obligation to do what is right, so far as they know what is right. This obligation is finally and completely due to God, and it is due to Him because He, the Divine Person, has actually in Himself all the perfections which constitute the human ideal, and is thus the eternal law of

All duty
covered by the
obligation
ultimately due
to God.

¹ Muirhead: *The Elements of Ethics*, p. 103.

righteousness to all persons. Hence, whenever a man recognises any duty within himself, he knows that his duty is already recognised and willed by God, and that he is bound to God in the matter of this duty. Thus there can be no duty for man which is not owed by man to God.

But it very often happens that a man recognises a duty towards his fellowman, which that fellowman does not recognise at all. A charitable man may recognise that it is his duty to attend to the poor and the sick, although these men, were they well, might never consider it their duty to do such acts of kindness. In this case the duty cannot be owed to the men, they are lower than the person who owes the duty. Hence the duty is owed to God.

In what sense we owe duties to our fellow-men.

There are again a number of duties which are well recognised and which all men expect of their fellowmen. All men, for instance, expect not to be molested when they walk abroad. All persons stand on the same level in respect of such duties, and we may without impropriety say that such duties are owed to our fellowmen.

§ 105. *Acquisition of Merit and Demerit.*

Merit acquired by exceeding, demerit by falling short of the understood standard of duty.

From these considerations as to the extent to which obligation can bind one person to another we may deduce certain conclusions as to merit and desert as existing between persons.

Merit and demerit as between two persons is measured by the mutually understood standard of duty. A acquires merit towards B, when A's treatment of B exceeds the mutually understood standard of duty, and he incurs demerit towards B when it falls short of the mutually understood standard of duty.

§ 106. *Can we acquire Merit towards God?*

Can we acquire merit towards God? No; for we can never transcend our obligations to Him. A person acquires merit towards another person when he exceeds this mutually understood standard. Hence we may determine the extent of our obligation to God. God does not require that we should come up to the absolute ideal of His infinite perfection, which is quite beyond our understanding, and which, therefore, is not a mutually understood standard of duty. But God does require us to come up to that relative ideal of perfect humanity, which is revealed to us in conscience if we only use conscience rightly. This ought to be the mutually understood standard of duty between God and man, and we are under obligation to conform to this standard.

Merit cannot
be acquired
towards God,

This obligation men might fulfil, but they never can acquire merit towards God because they never can transcend it. Nay, rather, men always fall short even of what they understand to be their duty to God, and this, worse still, even falls far short of that ideal of humanity which is the true measure of their obligation to God. Thus all self-reliance for moral harmony with God is utterly cut away.

§ 107. *Can we acquire Merit towards our Fellowmen?*

Can we acquire merit towards our fellowmen? Yes: for we may and often do transcend our obligation to them.

but it can be
acquired
towards our
fellowmen.

The extent of the obligation which subsists between different persons depends on the mutually understood standard of duty; and among men it may be said to vary with the nature of the act expected and the nature of the mutual understanding expecting it. Thus between

man and man, a mutual understanding, though it cannot make wrong acts binding, makes an indifferent act obligatory, and gives a double obligation to right acts; and again, if the obligation is explicitly fixed in language or writing, it becomes more binding. Now among men the mutually understood standard of duty is very low, and the mutual understanding is often very uncertain and far from clear. Hence it will be quite possible for a man in his actions to far exceed his obligations to his fellowmen, to transcend the mutually understood standard of duty, and so to acquire merit towards his fellowmen.

Modern Humanitarians say that since all obligation rests on the authority of the moral law, all right actions are equally due to our fellowmen. Charity¹ is due to them as much as justice. This is a false and confused view. As between man and man the claims of charity and of justice are not equally valid. Justice is part of the mutually understood standard of duty, charity is not. But when a man has recognised in his heart that charitable actions are required of him by God, then, as between the man and God, charity is as obligatory as justice. Thus while justice can be demanded by man from man, charity must adopt the language of pleading. Otherwise we erect a false standard of duty on the one hand, and create false expectations on the other. The ministrations of charity would be more wholesome and more dignified, if they were done "not as unto men, but unto God."

§ 108. *Merit may be measured by Strength of Temptation.*

Merit may be estimated as proportionate to strength of temptation.

There is another way in which the merit of right conduct may be estimated, which depends on the con-

¹ We use the term in the narrower sense which it bears, for instance, in the phrase 'charitable societies'

sideration that man is in a state of probation and is therefore subject to temptation. From this point of view merit is that moral value which we assign to right action when we measure its value by the strength of the temptation which the doer of the act had to overcome. The stronger the temptation, the greater the merit of right action; the slighter the temptation, the greater the demerit of wrong action. Merit arises from the fact that all men alike are in a state of probation, that is to say, they are exposed to temptations of various kinds and degrees, but their temptations are never such that they could not have been overcome. Temptation again arises from the fact that some impulses, which are lowest in the eyes of conscience, are strongest in our liking, and take the lead; and some impulses, which are highest in the eyes of conscience, are weakest in our liking. The stronger the wrong impulses are, and the more the order of our liking differs from the order of conscience, the greater the temptation, and hence the smaller the demerit of wrong action.

It follows at once that the most vicious and repulsive life need not be the most sinful. For those lives are the most vicious and repulsive which are lived by persons whose whole nature has been distorted by the degradation of their surroundings. For such the temptation to do wrong is strongest, and, therefore, the sin of doing wrong is least.

§ 109. *Merit and Desert.*

Lastly, a distinction has been drawn by Dr. Martineau between desert and merit based upon the consideration that there are a certain number of duties which are clearly marked out for all men and to which they are

Performance of
ordinary duties
acquires desert.

pledged, and further, that there is a certain amount of temptation to which all men are exposed.

Desert then belongs to such actions as lie within the sphere of pledged duty. The right performance of pledged duties under ordinary temptation has desert.

CHAPTER XI.

DUTIES AND VIRTUES.

§ 110. Meaning of the terms Duties and Virtues.

THE life of right action in the concrete assumes a number of different forms or aspects which it is useful to distinguish and define. If we regard morality as essentially obedience to the moral law these aspects of moral life will appear as *duties*, and in enumerating them we shall be giving a table of fundamental duties. If with the ancients we regard morality as the outcome of a character habitually disposed to do what is right, these aspects of moral life will appear as *virtues*, as excellent habits of will, and in enumerating them we shall be giving a list of cardinal virtues. Duty and virtue are two ways of describing the same thing,—virtue is the term used by ancients, duty is the favourite term with modern writers. The life of right action may also be regarded under a third aspect, as manifesting itself in society and in social institutions, and if we were to review morality in the concrete from this point of view, we should have to give a list of *moral institutions* regarded as the mode in which morality gives effect to the various wants of mankind. This is the point of view of Mr. Alexander, and was, to a certain extent, the point

of view of Plato. But whether we regard the life of right action as manifested in duties, or in virtues, or in institutions, we must always remember that these different aspects of morality are forms of a single life; forms of moral life, which may be distinguished, but cannot be separated; aspects of an indivisible unity which merge into one another; or, at most, stages of a development, each of which leads inevitably to the next beyond it.

Setting aside the consideration of moral institutions, with which ethical writers do not commonly deal, we may now proceed to the enumeration and classification of the fundamental virtues or duties.

Are the spheres
of duty and vir-
tue coincident?

Before proceeding, however, to a classification, it is necessary to discuss the question as to whether the spheres of duty and virtue are coincident. Dr Sidgwick is inclined to draw a distinction. "In its common use," he says, "each term seems to include something excluded from the other. We should scarcely say that it was virtuous—under ordinary circumstances—to pay one's debts, or give one's children a decent education, or keep one's aged parents from starving; because these are duties which most men perform, and only bad men neglect. Again, there are excellent actions which we do not commonly call duties, though we praise man for doing them; as for a rich man to live very plainly and devote his income to works of public beneficence. At the same time the lines of distinction are very doubtfully drawn on either side; for we certainly call men virtuous for doing what is strictly their duty when they are under strong temptation to omit it; and we can hardly deny that it is, in some sense, a man's strict duty to do whatever action he judges most excellent, so far as it is in his power."¹ It will thus be seen that Dr. Sidgwick in-

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 219, 220.

clines to apply virtue to acts which have merit, and duty to such as merely have desert.

This distinction does not, however, really conflict with the view of coincidence which we have maintained. And that for two reasons :

(1) In the first place, the distinction only appears, and rightly appears, when the mutually understood standard of duty as between man and man is taken as the basis of moral judgment. When, however, the judgment is based upon the essential principles of moral obligation, the distinction disappears, just as the distinction between merit and desert also disappears.

(2) In the second place, the distinction can only be drawn with reference to our judgments of others, and never arises when we pass moral judgments on ourselves. "We should agree," says Dr. Sidgwick, "that a truly moral man cannot say to himself, 'this is the best thing on the whole for me to do, but yet it is not my duty to do it though it is in my power? this would certainly seem to common sense an immoral paradox.'" ¹ The distinction is due to the "different degrees of our knowledge in our own case and in that of others," and disappears when the primary and fundamental act of moral judgment—that of a man on himself—is performed.

It would seem, therefore, to follow that the distinction of the spheres of duty and virtue applies only in the case of a particular mode of the moral judgment, and arises from the imperfection of the data upon which the judgment is constructed, and that it is in no way an essential distinction, nor intended to be so by Dr. Sidgwick. We may hence conclude that the ordinary distinction between the terms, corresponding to that between the

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

terms merit and desert, in no way conflicts with the statement that the spheres of the two are essentially coincident, and that the only essential distinction between them is difference of aspect.

§ 111. *Classification of Virtues.*

Classification
of virtues
offered by
(1) Plato,

Various classifications of virtues or duties have been adopted by different ethical writers.

(1) Plato gives us four cardinal virtues—temperance, courage, wisdom, justice. Temperance is the virtue of the passionate element in the soul, courage is the virtue of the spirited element, wisdom is the virtue of reason, justice is the virtue of the soul as a whole, when reason with the assistance of the spirited element controls the passions.

This classification seems both defective and redundant. It is meagre, and serves its purpose only because justice is used to include everything not accounted for by the rest. In such a summary classification it seems unnecessary to distinguish courage from temperance, since both are forms of self-control. The importance given to courage as a virtue, and the corresponding importance given to the soldiers as a state institution, and to the spirited element as a part of the soul, must be traced to the circumstances of Plato's time, when every Greek city imperatively required its citizens to be ready to fight for its freedom.

(2) Aristotle,

(2) Aristotle divides virtues into intellectual and moral. There are two intellectual virtues;—wisdom, which is the virtue or excellence of speculative reason; and prudence, which is the virtue or excellence of practical reason.¹ The moral virtues are much more

¹ The intellectual virtues are named by Aristotle *sophia* and *phronesis*, respectively. It is difficult to find exact equivalents in

numerous. The two principal moral virtues are, apparently, justice and high-mindedness, which as being a kind of ideal self-respect, is regarded as the crown of the virtues, depending on them for its existence, and in return intensifying their force. But besides these we have given us courage, temperance, liberality, munificence, right ambition, good temper, civility, sincerity, wittiness, modesty, just resentment. These virtues are represented as a mean state of feeling lying between two vicious extremes, as for instance, courage is a mean between cowardice and rashness. Aristotle also distinguishes certain moral states which are respectively more and less in virtue, these are heroic or divine virtue, which is more than virtue, and continence, which is less than virtue.

Aristotle's account of the virtues is in many points incomplete and unsystematic. The list of moral virtues seems to have been made up haphazard, the virtues being set down anyhow just as they came in Aristotle's mind. It is uncertain whether even Aristotle intended the list to be complete. On the whole, Aristotle's classification of the virtues may be taken to amount to this. Virtues are to be divided into intellectual and moral. Moral virtues are again to be divided into self-regarding and social. This classification may be accepted as sufficient for all practical purposes, and to this extent the classification may be admitted, and is that which we shall adopt.

(3) In the middle ages it was customary to speak of ^{(3) Mediaeval writers,} seven fundamental virtues and of seven deadly sins.

English. *Σοφία* is explained by Aristotle to consist in the union of scientific knowledge and reason about objects of the noblest nature. (*Nic. Ethics*, vi. 7.) It is distinguished from *φρονήσις* inasmuch as the latter implies knowledge of particular facts, and results in action.

The seven fundamental virtues were the four cardinal virtues of Plato and the ancients, together with the three great Christian virtues spoken of by St Paul, - faith, hope, and love. Thus the seven virtues were temperance, courage, wisdom, justice, faith, hope, and love.

This list is open to the same objections as the original list given by Plato. Why in such a summary list is courage distinguished from temperance, and why is no mention made of truth?

(1) Hobbes and his opponents,

(4) In modern times the English philosopher Hobbes maintained that all duties were duties to self. And in reaction against Hobbes English ethical writers have tended to classify duties and virtues under two heads - into self-regarding duties and social duties. But this classification seems inadequate, as it seems to afford no satisfactory place for such duties as veracity and sincerity.

(5) Whewell.

(5) Dr. Whewell gives a fivefold classification of duties and virtues under the heads of benevolence, justice, truth, purity, and order. Of these justice and benevolence seem to go together as forms of social virtue, and purity and order go together as self-regarding virtue.

We thus seem to arrive at a fairly adequate and satisfactory analysis which affords us a threefold classification of duties and virtues into (1) intellectual virtues connected with truth; (2) self-regarding virtues, and (3) social virtues.

Three groups of virtues: intellectual, self-regarding, and social: these closely connected.

§ 112. *Virtues classified into Intellectual, Self-regarding, and Social.*

We start then with the classification of virtues into three groups—Intellectual virtues connected with truth,

self-regarding virtues, and social virtues. The three classes of virtues are really closely connected together. We might call the second and the third the particular forms of the first. If we call intellectual virtue truth, we may call self-regarding virtue truth to one's personality, and social virtue truth to the personality of others. Or if, looking at intellectual virtue in its practical application to life, we call it wisdom, then self-regarding virtue may be called wisdom for oneself, and social virtue wisdom for others. Again, self-regarding virtues and social virtues are closely connected. A man cannot be true to his own personality without being true to the personality of others; he cannot realise his own true self without helping others to self-realisation.

§ 113. *Each of these has a Positive, a Negative, and a Practical Aspect.*

The three classes of virtues may each of them again be subdivided into three. Each of these kinds of virtues has a negative aspect, a positive aspect, and a practical aspect. The duty of truth may be represented as primarily the duty of not deceiving or misleading one's fellowmen. In its positive form it becomes the earnest pursuit of truth. Lastly, the practical application of truth to life is prudence or wisdom. In the same way the negative form of self-regarding virtue is self-control or temperance; its positive form is self-respect or self-reverence; and its practical form is self-culture. Again, the social virtue in its negative form is justice or the duty of freedom, the duty of not interfering with the development of personality in others; in its positive form it is benevolence, the duty of fraternity, or of actively helping others; in its practical form it is the

Each class has a positive, a negative and a practical aspect.

duty of social organisation for the development of personal life, and includes such virtues as family love, public spirit, patriotism, loyalty.

Close connection
between these
different forms
of virtue.

All these different forms of virtue are closely connected with one another. Without temperance there can be no self-respect. The man who rightly respects himself will be the man of perfect self-control, and would be also the man of perfect culture. The man who earnestly seeks after truth and the knowledge of it is also the man who will be most careful not to misrepresent truth to himself or to others. And although virtue is not knowledge, yet, as a rule, the man who knows the truth is also a man who is prudent and wise in the management of his life. Lastly, there is the closest connection between justice and benevolence. Justice has been called by St. Augustine the order of love, and by Leibnitz the benevolence of the wise. Benevolence is justice touched with emotion. And so, too, neither justice nor benevolence can be properly exhibited, except in moral institutions.

Thus the whole chain of virtues is connected together from end to end. Beginning with the most abstract conception of moral life, as the life of truth or reason, we end with the most concrete forms of it, as life in moral institutions. We begin with the virtues of personal self, we end with the duties of a person towards his family and his society, towards his country and mankind in general.

A. INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES.

§ 114. (1) *Veracity*.

Veracity the
negative truth,
moral virtue.

Intellectual honesty and veracity are primarily negative virtues. Reason being properly the organ of truth,

and speech being properly the means by which men fulfil their natural desire to communicate the truth, it is clear that a man will at first naturally and spontaneously seek to have true ideas and to communicate true ideas. In this sense it is correct to say that veracity is natural. But as men grow older, evil impulses and desires arise which urge them to shut their eyes to the truth and to conceal it from others. Through their control over the intellect they distort or suppress their reason, they falsify their consciousness, and become intellectually dishonest, and through their control over the outward expressions of thought, and especially of language, they deceive their fellowmen by lying. The duty of intellectual honesty and veracity consists in suppressing such evil tendencies, and in allowing reason and speech to do their natural and proper work. The two evils and the two virtues are closely connected. A man who constantly deceives others, ends by deceiving himself, and it is only by taking care that our own ideas are clear and accurate that we can succeed in communicating true ideas to others.

It has a two-fold task.

§ 115. (2) *Zeal for Truth.*

The more active form of intellectual virtue may be called zeal for truth. A man who once understands the duty of intellectual honesty and veracity will not be content to stop here. He will see that it is his duty not merely to take care that such ideas as he has are true, or that he communicates the truth as he knows it to such people as he meets, but that he must also seek after truth for himself, seek to widen and correct the ideas he has already acquired, and seek to spread and increase the knowledge of truth among his fellowmen. This is pre-eminently exemplified in the work of

Zeal for truth the positive intellectual virtue.

original and scientific research and in the work of education, and these two things are closely connected together. No man can teach well who is not also seeking after truth.

§ 116 (3) *Prudence*

Wisdom or
prudence the
practical appli-
cation of truth
to life.

Intellectual virtue shown in the application of truth to practical life, may be called in the widest sense wisdom, and in a narrower sense prudence. Prudence may be called wisdom for a man's self, and wisdom seems to be a higher kind of prudence which takes a wider view of life, and thinks of other persons as well as the self. Wisdom in its widest sense may be and often has been identified with the whole of morality.

§ 117. *Problem of Veracity.*

Is it ever right
to tell a lie?
Authority says
"yes."

There are certain difficulties connected with intellectual virtues which it seems necessary to examine.

Ought we always to tell the truth? Ought we to tell the truth to assassins, robbers, armed enemies, and mad men?

But on what
ground? The
basis of veracity
affords the
answer.

If we appeal to authority the answer to this question cannot be doubtful. The agents of justice, as for instance, policemen and detectives, habitually practise deception in order to bring criminals to justice. In the Bible, Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, is praised for deceiving Sisera, the captain of the enemies of the Jews, and enticing him to go to sleep in her tent where she killed him. Again, doctors or medical attendants do not hesitate to deceive madmen. Thus it seems to be admitted by authority that we are not bound to tell the truth to assassins, armed enemies, and madmen. The question is, on what ground are we to justify this decision? ~~Let us take a particular case.~~

Suppose an innocent man is pursued by murderers

who seek his life: you conceal him, and they ask you if you know where he is: are you bound to tell them the truth? If you deceive them will you break the law of veracity? The answer is, no. The duty of veracity is negative, it bids us when communicating with our fellow-men not to violate the common understanding which binds us together, as persons and members of society, the sign of which is the common language.¹ But we cannot admit to the claims of this common understanding such men as assassins, robbers, armed enemies, and madmen. They are outlaws from society; they have broken the bonds of personality; the rule of veracity does not apply to them. We are certainly bound to think of the truth as it really is, but we are not bound to declare it, except to such as are real members of society. We are not bound to betray the truth to a false brother who wishes to desecrate the truth, but we may even keep him from doing so by withholding the truth from him. We are not bound then to tell murderers the truth. We may even deceive them at our discretion.

Are there any others besides assassins, robbers, armed enemies, and madmen to whom we are not bound to tell the truth?

It is difficult to determine when and how we may refuse to admit men to the claims of the common understanding involved in speech. Such cases must be settled definitely by a consideration of consequences. But it clearly may happen that men who are within the pale of society may forfeit its protection and their claim to know the truth, when they overstrain their rights, and ask unwarrantable questions, which we cannot answer

¹ Cf. S. Paul, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, iv. 25, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another."

truly, nor yet refuse to answer, without betraying a confidence accepted as sacred. Under such circumstances perhaps we may tell a guiltless lie.

Such, says Dr. Martineau, seems to be theoretically the right view about these questions, and yet a lie under any circumstances cannot but excite unutterable repugnance. This seems to be a wise provision in our nature to prevent a too lax and too easy application of the negative principle enunciated above. Were we not safeguarded by some such check it would, perhaps, be only too easy for us to break the law of truth under the pretended justification of a higher principle.

§ 118 *Virtue and Knowledge*

Can a man know
right and d.
wrong?

There is a difficulty with regard to the application of truth to practical life or wisdom, which was especially puzzling to the ancients. Socrates had said that virtue was knowledge. No man could know the truth about himself and how he ought to live, and then do what was wrong. Yet, as a matter of fact, nothing is more common in the world than that a man should know what is right and do what is wrong. To the ancients this seemed a paradox, for they had not clearly distinguished the will as a mental power distinct from reason. To us the question though puzzling does not seem unanswerable. The will, as we know, controls consciousness; we are able to direct attention voluntarily to certain objects and to withdraw it voluntarily from others. Thus we may very well be said to know a truth, in the sense that we were once clearly conscious of it, and that it is preserved in our memory, and yet we may act as if we did not know it, because our will, which controls our attention and our consciousness, may enable us to neglect it at the time we are acting.

§ 119. *Capability for discovering Truth.*

We have said that it is an intellectual duty to seek after clear and accurate ideas. Is it then the case that all men can, if they choose, attain to an equal measure of truth and to equally clear and accurate ideas? This was, in fact, the belief of Descartes, who maintained that all men, if they use the right method, could reach to equal shares of truth, and that ignorance like vice is always voluntary. It seems, however, impossible to maintain this view; for though it is doubtless our duty to aim at the attainment of truth, and though the attainment of truth requires effort, it is not possible for us to think that this voluntary effort must in all cases be crowned with an equal measure of success. It seems necessary therefore to define accurately the scope of this intellectual virtue. "It would be generally agreed that there are certain violent passions and sensual appetites which are known to be liable to prevent moral apprehensions; and that these are to some extent in the control of the will; and that a man who uses his moral efforts to control them, when he wishes to decide on ends of action, may be said to be so far voluntarily wise."¹ Thus the duty of seeking truth seems to consist in (1) the exertion of a strong effort directed towards the attainment of truth; and (2) the exercise of self-control over intruding passions. But the amount of concrete success which may attend faithful effort and vigilant self-control may differ widely in individual cases, owing to circumstances with reference to which man is entirely passive.

Can all men attain to an equal measure of truth?

Scope of the positive intellectual virtue.

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

•B SELF-REGARDING VIRTUES.

§ 120. (1) *Temperance or Self-Control.*

Temperance
the negative
self-regarding
virtue.

The first of the self-regarding virtues or duties is temperance or self-control. Here the self of which we are thinking is the lower self, the individual self, the self of feeling or impulse. We have seen that the perfect life of personality means the organisation of the impulses into character. Not that the natural impulse is in itself evil, but it is evil in man if it is not brought under the control of the rational self which alone can give it its true value and permanence. Intemperance is the disorganisation of the impulses, the allowing of the impulses to escape from the control of the rational self. As a rule, it is one particular impulse or set of impulses in the individual which tends to escape from the control of the rational self. A man has to struggle not with evil in general, but with his besetting sin. The miser has to struggle with cupidity, the drunkard with the love of drink. A man, therefore, must know himself and his besetting sin. Sometimes he may find that some impulse is so strong in him that his only course is to kill it outright, so that temperance in respect of this impulse is for him complete abstinence. But, as a rule, temperance is moderation, not abstinence.

It needs to be
completed by a
positive virtue.

Temperance or self-control is the foundation of all good life. But it is only the negative side of self-regarding virtue. Some persons there may be who are all their lives engaged in struggling against evil tendencies, so that they leave themselves but little time or energy for positive efforts after virtue, but most people will feel that the devotion of their energies to some active form of good is the best way of fighting evil within them. And

upon all men, so much positive virtue at least is incumbent as is implied in self respect.

§ 121. (2) *Self-Respect.*

Just as a man's duty to his lower self is the negative duty of self-control, so a man's duty to his higher personal self is the positive duty of self-respect, respect for the ideal humanity which personality represents. Such a consciousness of the dignity of human nature is quite compatible with the utmost humility. For, when a man compares what he is, with the ideal of what he ought to be, he will surely feel humble and ashamed.

Self-respect
the positive
self-regarding
duty:

It should be
with humility.

At the same time this consciousness of the dignity of humanity should enable a man to preserve his dignity in the affairs of life. Such a man will see that the life of personality must in a sense be lived alone. Other men can only know him superficially—other men can only judge him superficially. But with himself there can be no disguise; he knows what he is, he knows what he ought to be, he is his own judge. The life of such a man will be nobly independent and self-content.

The solitude
of the personal
life.

A man should never forget the solitude of personality, the duty of reverencing the ideal self and so judging his actual self. The man who shrinks from this duty, who lives always in the society of others and submits himself to their judgment, is a moral weakling. "Solitude is to character what space is to the tree"

§ 122. (3) *Self-Culture.*

The practical carrying out of self-regarding duty takes the form of culture or self-development. Culture means not merely the development of our different capacities, but the harmonious and symmetrical development of all our capacities in a complete and single life. Self-culture

Self-culture
the practical
carrying out of
self-regarding
duty.

and self-development must, in the first place, be individual. In every man there is an individual soul unique and interesting, differing from all other souls and requiring a peculiar development. The true career for each man is the career in which he can most completely realise his individuality. It is the misfortune of modern life that a large number of men spend their energies in work for which they feel they have no vocation. Their career is mere routine. But it is each man's duty to himself to know his own individual aptitude, and to seek to run in the course appointed him by nature. Such self-culture fits us best for the service of others.

It needs the
contemplation
of transcendent
ideals.

At the same time it is necessary for a man to transcend his individuality. The ideal of personality is essentially universal. Each side of our nature, the intellectual, the æsthetic, and the active, sides of the mind, supplies us with its ideal, the true, the beautiful, the good. It is good for man to turn aside from the low level of his daily life and to ascend for a time to the summit points of our being, from whence he may take larger views. Faithfulness to the truth delivers a man from narrowness and self-seeking. The contemplation of the beautiful uplifts and enlarges the soul. Communion with absolute goodness purifies it. The healthy soul must breathe at times the pure atmosphere of the infinite and the ideal.

Of the three ideals, the ideal of the good comprehends and perfects the other two. The æsthetic life by itself is weak, and the intellectual life is hard and cold. If we are to live a perfect life, we must make our devotion to the beautiful and the true part of our supreme devotion to the good. But we must not allow our devotion to the good to exclude our devotion to the beautiful and the

Yet, once again, we must not allow our devotion to the ideal and the infinite to lead us to neglect the paramount claims of the actual finite world. We turn aside for a moment from the path of daily duty, to contemplate the true, the beautiful, and the good, only that we may return to our daily duty refreshed and reinvigorated. We gaze at the stars above us that we may know how to guide our steps. But should we continue all the while gazing at the stars we may, like the foolish philosopher, end by falling into the well. Each man's life and duty is determined by his station, by actual finite relations, and he can only develop his true self by being true to the calls of daily duty. And lastly, it is to be noticed that every individual will find the surest and most effective method of self-development to consist in rendering such services to his fellowmen as he finds ready at hand in the daily work of life. Thus in fact true self-culture is impossible without benevolence.

But should not overlook the paramount claims of actual life

What place will the culture of the body have in self-development? The body is the instrument of the soul, and it is our duty to care for the body, as a means towards the development of the spiritual self. The health of the body is not a part of the moral life, but it is a basis of moral life. As such the importance of physical well-being cannot well be exaggerated. The development of moral life depends upon the preservation and development of physical life.

Physical self-culture.

123. *Relation between Self-Regarding and Social Virtues.*

In passing from the self-regarding virtues and duties to the social virtues and duties, we must first examine the connection between these two spheres of duty and virtue.

The connection between the self-regarding and social virtues is natural.

The connection is first of all a natural one.

nature man is a social animal, a being full of sympathetic impulses towards his fellow beings. Reflection only deepens and strengthens this connection between every man and his fellowmen. Reason shows a man that he is bound up in a living union with his fellowmen, and that he cannot realise his own true nature unless he devotes himself to the common good of humanity. Moral reason then sets before man an ideal of personal life, of life directed towards the realisation of personality regarded as an objective end, and therefore sought after in other persons. The rule for the realisation of personality is, be a person and respect personality in others. In serving others we serve ourselves, and in both cases we serve humanity. We must seek to realise personality in ourselves by serving personality in others.

Self-realisation means serving personality in others.

But a man can only realise his own personality.

At the same time we must remember that personality is always individual. Just as the individual apart from society is a mere abstraction, so society apart from the individual is also an abstraction. The only personality a man can realise and therefore the only personality which a man ought to realise, is his own personality. He serves others because this is the only possible way of realising his own personality.

Hence there are limits to social virtue.

This suggests that there are necessarily limits to social virtue. Kant has tried to express these limits by saying that we cannot aim at the perfection of other men, but only at their happiness. No man can make another man good; this is the work of the man himself and no one else. And to a certain extent Kant is right. For it is certainly true that man is free, and that if he is to become good, he must become good of his own free will. But it does not seem to follow that we should on this account limit ourselves to the consideration of the happiness of others. We are bound not only, as Kant says,

to respect personality in others, but also to serve personality in others. Our duty towards other persons has a negative and positive aspect. Negatively we are bound not to hinder the development of their personal life, positively we are bound to remove all obstacles from their way and to create favourable conditions for their personal development. But beyond this we cannot go.

C. SOCIAL VIRTUES.

§ 124. (1) *Justice*

Justice may be called the negative aspect of social virtue. The least we can do for our fellowmen is to abstain from infringing their rights as persons. The importance of the virtue of justice has been from the first recognised by ethical writers, but they have always felt considerable difficulties in defining it. Justice the negative aspect of social virtue

Aristotle gives a very elaborate and very excellent account of the matter. He distinguishes between objective justice, that is, just actions or the just treatment of persons, and subjective justice, that is, the habitual desire in the mind to do objective justice. Turning to objective justice, Aristotle points out that it is essentially the correct proportional treatment of persons according to their merits. Of this justice there are two kinds: (a) Distributive justice, in which a judge distributes two or more persons' shares of something which they care for, according to their merits. (b) Corrective justice, in which a judge tries to remedy an unjust distribution between two persons by taking something from the one and giving it to the other. Aristotle's account of justice

Aristotle also notices (c) Reciprocity as a third form of objective justice, justice in commercial relations. Here (1) Objective justice, as (a) Distributive (b) Corrective (c) Reciprocity

the merits of the person concerned are not considered. Exchanges of wealth take place according to the rule of equality.

Though many ethical writers have written since Aristotle, they do not seem to have improved upon this account of objective justice. All that we need do is to get rid of unnecessary subtleties, and draw a broad distinction between justice in the strict legal sense of the term and justice as a moral virtue.

Objective justice is the correct proportional treatment of two or more persons according to their merits.

We may say then with Aristotle that objective justice is the correct proportional treatment of two or more persons according to their merits. It implies --

- (a) a judge to treat the persons according to their deserts or merits.
- (b) that in treating them he disposes of something they care for,
- (c) that there are at least two persons whose merit the judge compares. Justice requires three persons at least; when it seems to arise between two persons, a third is implied.

Every person as a person has a right to such treatment; it is the least that he is entitled to. The duty of justice is therefore in a sense negative. It takes care that the rights of persons are not infringed. The difference between legal justice and moral justice is this, that legal justice can only consider such relations and duties between persons as are fixed and recognised by law. Thus legal justice is the correct proportional treatment of two or more persons according as they perform well or ill legally fixed and recognised duties.

Subjective justice is the habitual desire to treat persons justly.

Such being the exact nature of objective justice, subjective justice, justice as a quality of the mind, is simply the habitual desire to treat persons justly, that is, to treat them according to their personal merit and per-

sonal worth.¹ Subjective justice has accordingly been defined by the Roman jurists as the fixed and enduring will to give each his own.¹

§ 125. (2) *Benevolence.*

The more positive form of social virtue is benevolence. The benevolent man is not content to do bare justice to his fellowmen, to respect their rights as persons to treatment according to their merits. The benevolent man makes active efforts to serve others and help others to become better men and more deserving persons. The benevolent man believes that all men as persons are capable of realising the ideal of humanity, and in each individual he sympathises with the individual talents and powers and with the individual difficulties and failings.

Benevolence the positive form of social virtue.

A difficult question is sometimes raised regarding the persons towards whom, and the extent to which, benevolence is to be exercised. To the first part of this question it is not easy to find a satisfactory reply. Common sense would seem to dictate that we owe benevolence primarily to our parents and relations and friends. On the other hand, common sense also emphasises the value of patriotism and love of mankind. The settlement of the respective claims of these narrower and wider spheres, when they apparently conflict, is not easy to determine. Two principles may, however, be suggested as capable of affording a solution: (1) that, generally speaking, benevolence should be rendered to human beings in proportion to their affinity to ourselves; (2) that the needs of our own personality are to be taken as a guide when the problem is complicated.

Towards whom is benevolence to be exercised

¹ "Justitia est constans et perpetua voluntas suum cuique tribuendi."

How far ought a man to sacrifice his own interests to those of others

This second principle will also apply to the second part of the question—that, namely, which has regard to the extent to which benevolence should be exercised. How far, then, ought any man to sink his own well-being in that of others? How far can he be called upon to neglect his own self-culture in order to help others? It is difficult to answer such questions precisely. Some men seem to have special gifts for sympathising with and helping others. In such cases we may believe that the sacrifice of some immediate form or opportunity of self-culture will be compensated by a richer and completer life. In other cases it may be pointed out that often the best way of doing good to others is to be good ourselves, and that in the true service of ourselves we arrive at the true service of others. We may, further, apply here what has already been said regarding the relation between social virtue and self-regarding virtue.

Finally as regards devotion to the state, we may say that the state cannot legitimately ask a man to be false to his own ideals of life, for the state being a moral institution cannot, without contradicting its nature, demand a moral sacrifice.

§ 126. *Relation between Justice and Benevolence.*

Benevolence is based upon justice.

The relation between justice and benevolence is very close. Justice is the basis of benevolence. We cannot show true benevolence to another man unless we have first been just to him. We must be just before we can be generous. We cannot do good to a man unless we see good in him. A philanthropist who goes to his fellowman and practically says to him, 'I see very little good in you; to me you seem hopeless and degraded; but it is my duty to try and do you good, and so I will,' such a philanthropist is not really benevolent.

Or suppose a man says to another who asks his forgiveness, 'Yes, I forgive; it is my duty to do so; but you seem to me to be quite untrustworthy, I shall therefore not punish you, but in future I shall not trust you'; such a man is not benevolent, because he is not just. To do good to our fellowmen, we must first do them justice; we must find out the good that is in them, and show what we expect of them on this account.

On the other hand, benevolence is the highest and only perfect form of justice, we can only come to know the good that is in men by sympathising with them and trying to help them. Till we do so our knowledge of our fellowmen is imperfect, and we cannot do them full justice. But it is also the only perfect form of justice

So then justice and benevolence are both exercised in the social sphere and are both social virtues. But justice shows itself rather in dealing with the community in general, benevolence shows itself in the treatment of individuals. Justice is the virtue which belongs more especially to the state; benevolence is the virtue of private and domestic life. Justice deals with the many, benevolence in its characteristic form of friendship is confined to a few. Justice insists on equality, benevolence seizes upon the individuality of man. Benevolence is therefore more just than justice, because it knows better than justice the merits of the individual. They have different spheres and modes of activity.

§ 127. (3) *Social Virtue in Practice.*

Social virtue in practice gives rise to a number of virtues which have been classified under two heads, according as our relations with our fellowmen are voluntary and involuntary. In involuntary relations, we have the virtues of filial piety, parental affection, *virtues arising from social virtue in practice are classified into

(1) virtues
shown in
involuntary
relations,

and conjugal love in the family, of public spirit towards the locality where one lives, of patriotism to one's country, of philanthropy to one's fellowmen. In

(2) those shown
in voluntary
relations.

voluntary relations we have the virtues of politeness, of loyalty to one's own party and convictions, and of toleration for other people's convictions.

TABLE OF VIRTUES

VIRTUES					
INTELLECTUAL		SELF-REGARDING		SOCIAL	
ZEAL FOR TRUTH (positive)	VERACITY (negative)	SELF-RESPECT (positive)	SELF-CONTROL or TEMPERANCE (negative)	SELF-CULTURE and INDUSTRY (practical)	
	PRUDENCE (practical)				
	PRUDENCE in the narrower sense				
In COMMUNICATION of truth -Concentration.	To ourselves -SINCERITY.	BENEVOLENCE (positive).	OBJECTIVE JUSTICE	SELECTIVE JUSTICE	
					To others -TRUTHFULNESS, with limitation of PROPER RESERVE
In INVOLUNTARY RELATIONS		In VOLUNTARY RELATIONS			
FILIAL PIETY. AFFECTION. (family).	PARENTAL AFFECTION.	PATRIOTISM (country)	CONJUGAL LOVE (family)	HONOUR POLITENESS (business) (society).	
	PUBLIC SPIRIT (neighbourhood)			LOYALTY to Church or Party, i.e., to one own convictions (society)	
				TOLERATION of other people's convictions (society)	

CHAPTER XII.

RELATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO SOCIETY.

§ 128. *Ancient Subordination of the Individual to Society.*

Ancient philosophers maintained that the individual existed only for the state.

THE relation of the individual to society has already been touched upon more than once, but it is necessary to discuss it in greater detail. The great Greek Philosophers Plato and Aristotle entirely subordinated the individual to society. The life and the duties of individuals were in their opinion to be explained by the requirements of state. Courage was a virtue because the state needed brave defenders. Suicide was wrong because it deprived the state of a citizen. And this tendency to place society before the individual is found in other ancient forms of civilised life, as, for instance in India, where the tendency has always been to subordinate the individual to his village or his tribe or his caste.

This view is false.
(1) In theory. It takes no count of human personality.

This view of the relation between the individual and his society is false both in theory and in practice. Every individual is something more than He has a unique personality, a peculiar nature of his own, which is in itself of infinite value, and which cannot be sacrificed without reserve to the requirements of the state. So far from the individual person existing for

the state, the state exists for the development of individual persons. So far from the requirements of the state accounting for the individual, it is the requirements of individual persons which account for the state.

In practice the attempt to subordinate the individual to the state destroys both. The individual at best has no sense of personal responsibility, his development is arrested, ~~he never truly becomes an individual person.~~ In the worst cases the individual man may be reduced to slavery. The ancient Greek cities contained an enormous number of slaves without whom it would have been impossible for the Greek citizen to devote himself exclusively to politics. Again, ~~the entire subordination of the individual to society arrests the growth of society.~~ Wherever the individual has been subordinated completely to the family, or to the village, social development has stopped at the family or the village, and national life has become impossible. In ancient Greece the city was made paramount over the individual. Hence Greek political development always stopped at the city, and the Greeks remained divided up into a number of independent cities, and so in the end fell an easy prey to a conqueror.

(2) In practice it destroys both the individual and the state.

§ 129. *Modern Subordination of Society to the Individual.*

In modern times the tendency has been to go to the opposite extreme and entirely subordinate society to the individual. The individual has been represented as almost complete in himself without society, but as having consented to enter into partnership with other individuals for the better protection of his life and property. Thus society came after the individual and originated from a contract which individuals enter into with one

Modern philosophers subordinate society to the individual.

another. According to this theory, society is partnership of individuals based upon an original contract.

The contract
theory of
Hobbes,

The original contract theory of society was first of all brought forward by Hobbes in the interests of absolute government. Hobbes lived in the times of the civil war between Charles the First and the Parliament. He was therefore not unnaturally impressed with the great evil of civil war, and the great importance of strong government. Under this impression he wrote his political treatise called "The Great Leviathan." According to Hobbes, individual men were at the outset entirely independent of their fellows, every man had a natural right to everything, every man tried to assert his right to everything, every man was as a wolf to his fellowman. Thus men are naturally so many wolves at civil war with one another. But nothing is more wretched than a state of civil war. The wolves, therefore, came together and determined on peace. The basis of this peace was a contract which limited the rights of individuals and defined their duties towards one another; government was set up to enforce the contract; and this is the origin of society, and of the great Leviathan Government which guards and enforces the original contract upon which society is based. From this Hobbes infers that government must be absolute, and that rebellion against government is in no case justifiable.

as applied by
Locke

Subsequent writers starting from the original contract theory of society came to conclusions widely different from those of Hobbes. Locke argued that, inasmuch as society is based on an original contract, and the sole object of government is the maintenance of the original contract, government forfeits all claim to allegiance if it breaks the contract itself. Rousseau carrying the doctrine to an extreme, argued that society was an

and Rousseau

artificial institution and a bad one even as such,' and that the best thing that men could do would be to destroy society and government, and to return to the state of nature in which every individual retained his full unlimited rights as man.

The original contract theory of society is far more erroneous and far more pernicious than the ancient theories which subordinated the individual to the State. The existence of an individual man apart from society is impossible.* There can be no such man existing before society as Hobbes supposes. A wild isolated man is not a man at all. By nature man is born to a society. What he is he to a great extent inherits. His works and thoughts are learned from society. His feelings, his wishes, his duties, all arise out of his relation to his fellowmen. His knowledge of moral law is only awakened in society. The relation of the individual to society is not in the least like the mechanical relation between the wheels of a clock and the clock itself. The wheels of a clock are each of them finished separately. Before they are put together they can be taken up and replaced without being themselves injured and without injuring the clock. But the individual never existed before or apart from society. He was not introduced into society artificially; he was born into society naturally. Man is "not an atom but a social unit."¹ And, therefore, he cannot be removed from society without being seriously injured himself and without injury to society. The relation of the individual to society is most like the living relation between the members of an organism and the organism itself, between the flower and the leaf and the plant itself, between the eye and the finger and the body itself.

The theory is an impossible one,

¹ Newman Smythe: *Christian Ethics*, p. 264.

The flower and the leaf, the eye and the finger, never existed apart from the plant or the body. They grew and developed as the plant and the body grew and developed, and they cannot live apart from the organism of which they are members. So it is with the individual and society. Thus the contract theory is disproved by the very constitution of man. But we may add further that it entirely fails to give any explanation of the existence of rights and obligations. Green puts the matter well: "The great objection to the representation of the right of a sovereign power over subjects, and the rights of individuals which are enforced by this 'imperium,' as having arisen out of a contract of all with all, is that it conveys a false notion of rights. It is not merely that the possibility of such a contract being made presupposes just that state of things—a *régime* of recognised and enforced obligations—which it is assumed to account for. . . . But such rights abstracted from social function and recognition could only be powers, or (according to Hobbes' definition) liberties to use powers, which comes to the same; *i.e.* they would not be rights at all; and from no combination or devolution of them could any right in the proper sense, anything more than a combined power, arise."¹

and has no
foundation
fact.

As a matter of history, the original contract theory has proved a complete failure. There is no evidence that there ever was such a state of things as Hobbes supposes, or that any society ever has been based upon a contract; while the French Revolution demonstrated the impossibility of Rousseau's views.

Its Element
of value

At the same time, the theory of contract expresses in a confused and erroneous way the truth that morality is only possible through the common recognition of a

¹ Green: *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 49.

common good, and through the embodiment of this recognition in common institutions. This represents what we may call its element of value. But in so far as it is, a theory of *contract* it is to be unhesitatingly rejected as false in sociology, false in ethics, and false in history.

§ 130. *Society and the Individual mutually imply and require each other*

Thus the true view of the relation between the individual and society is that neither can exist without the other. Each implies the other. They arise together, and they develop together side by side, and their union with one another is a living union, not a mechanical one; the connection is natural not artificial. This is true not merely of the individual in relation to society generally, but of the individual in relation to all the particular forms of society, the family, the village, the city, and the state.

The individual and society each need and imply the other

In the earliest form of human society we can hardly be said to have any individuals or any societies at all. Personality is unrecognised. The family does not exist. Instead of individual men being married to individual women, the men and women are united by groups to one another. The individual, the family, the village, the state, developed side by side; the development of the one overlapping and contributing to the development of others. Thus, the individual and the family imply one another, and so do the family and the State.¹

¹ A state is defined by Green as consisting not in an aggregate of individuals under a sovereign, but in a society in which the rights of men already associated in families and tribes are defined and harmonised. (*Principles*, etc., § 134.) This definition is, however, rather a definition of what a state ought to be, than a

What sense
society is an
organism.

In order to express this vital union between the individual and the society, it is customary nowadays to call society an organism, and it may perhaps be admitted that society is an organism or, at any rate, more like an organism than anything else. But if it is an organism, it must be noted that it differs widely from other organisms in this point. In the case of other organisms the organism is of more importance than its members. But in the case of society the members cannot be said to be of less importance than the organism. The personality of each individual is of infinite value, and the importance of society is due to the fact that it is a necessary condition of personal life. The state is not an end in itself, it is instrumental to the development of personal life.

§ 131. *Ethical Basis of the State.*

The duty of the
State is to pro-
tect the sphere
of personality
hence its ethical
basis.

Has the state then an ethical basis—~~is it a moral institution?~~ Yes, undoubtedly; the duty of the state is not merely to protect life and property, but to protect the sphere of personality, to make room for the personal life of each individual.¹ If individuals were left to themselves, they would not leave each other alone. Each individual would encroach upon his neighbour,

definition of what all states actually are. It is also, perhaps, not universally true that in actual history the family, the tribe, and the state grow together, and grow in that order. It would perhaps be better for practical purposes to define a state as a body of men living under one sovereign, and under a law which the sovereign will enforce; the sovereign being either an individual or a corporation.

¹ Thus the state maintains the 'jus naturae,' or 'natural right,' which may be defined as "that which is really necessary to the maintenance of the material conditions essential to the existence and perfection of human personality." (Green, *Principles*, etc., § 11, footnote.)

and no individual would be able to fully realise his own personality.

It is wrong then to speak of the action of the state by which it seeks to impose its will upon the individual will as state interference. The state should not be regarded as something alien which interferes with individual development. The state representing the general will should be regarded as representing the better self, to which the individual subordinates his individuality in order that he may realise his true personality. The action of the state should be a help, not a hindrance, to the development of personal life. The state has thus a negative and a positive function. Its negative function is to prevent interference with the liberty of the individual. Its positive function is the promotion of morality.

But how, it may be asked, can the state impose its will upon my will without robbing me of my freedom and arresting the growth of my personality? To this it may be answered that moral freedom is a matter of inward choice and inward preference, not of outward action. One will can impose itself upon another will without destroying its freedom, because all that the higher will imposes is a certain form of outward activity; it cannot change the inward movement of will. In this way the divine will is imposed upon the human will, and so it is with the will of the state. The state imposes its will upon individual citizens by controlling the outward action. Its object in so doing is to secure to each citizen the opportunity of living the true life of personality.

From this we see the true limit of state action. The state must not by its action invade the sphere of personality. This it may and sometimes does do in three ways.

Sometimes the state adopts a 'paternal' method of government which leaves as little as possible to the discretion of the individual. When it does so it invades the sphere of personal liberty. "But without any strictly moral object at all," writes Green, "laws have been made which check the development of the moral disposition. This has been done (a) by legal requirements of religious observance and profession of belief, which have tended to vitiate the religious sources of morality; (b) by prohibitions and restraints, unnecessary, or which have ceased to be necessary for maintaining the social conditions of the moral life, and which interfere with the growth of self-reliance, with the formation of a manly conscience and sense of moral dignity,—in short, with the moral autonomy which is the condition of the highest goodness, (c) by legal institutions which take away the occasion for the exercise of certain moral virtues . . . The true ground of objection to 'paternal government' is not that it violates the 'laissez faire' principle and conceives that its object is to make people good, to promote morality, but that it rests upon a misconception of morality. The real function of government being to maintain conditions of life in which morality shall be possible, and morality consisting in the disinterested performance of self-imposed duties, 'paternal government' does its best to make it impossible by narrowing the room for the imposition of duties and for the play of disinterested motives."¹ At the same time it must be remembered that a government more or less 'paternal' is a necessity at a certain stage of the development of social life. And the legal institutions which constitute Green's objection to paternal government are expedient and sometimes necessary where the disposition to certain

¹ Green: *Principles*, etc., §§ 17, 18. Cf. § 209.

kinds of virtue is either absent or very weak. In the development of society, as in the development of the individual, there is a stage of obedience to authority, which in its proper place, and at its own time, is not only salutary but inevitable.

Sometimes the state does not represent the general will. Its voice is not the voice of common personality on behalf of which it ought to speak. Such was the position of affairs at the time of the English and the French Revolutions. The actual state, ruling in the interests of a minority, was seeking to destroy the rights of personality of which it should have been the guardian.

Sometimes the mere process of time brings about a contradiction between what the state is and what it ought to be. The institutions and laws which were once good and adequate become out of date. Under these circumstances it becomes necessary to reform the constitution so that the state may once again truly represent the general will,¹ the common personality.

• § 132. *Moral Progress.*

In discussing the nature of the distinctions of right and wrong and the closely connected questions of the moral standard and of the end of right conduct, we were led to see that there were two sorts of rightness—relative rightness and absolute rightness—and that, similarly,

Moral progress means progress towards perfect knowledge of right, and perfect conduct based on that knowledge.

¹The 'general will' is not the same thing as the coercive power of the majority. It is, as Green says, the "unselfish interest in the common good which in various degrees actuates men in their dealings with each other." And when we say that the state must represent the 'general will,' we mean that "an interest in common good is the ground of political society, in the sense that without it no body of people would recognise any authority as having a claim on their common obedience." (Green: *Principles, etc.*, § 98.)

there were two standards of right action, a relative standard and an absolute standard. For an absolutely wise and absolutely good human being, the end of all actions would be the realisation of a clearly understood ideal of personal life. Such a being would know what it was absolutely right to do in every case. He would have within him an absolute standard of right action, and his acts would be right absolutely. But the ordinary man has no clear and perfect vision of the ideal of humanity. He has no absolute standard of right action. He has only conscience and moral reason which show him higher and lower alternatives to be chosen, and if he chooses what he conceives to be the higher alternative, his action is relatively right. We added that, although no actual man knew in this world the absolutely right standard of action, yet all men who are true to their conscience and moral reason, were advancing towards the knowledge of what is absolutely right. In other words, for ordinary men, moral life is a life of progress towards perfect knowledge of what is right and perfect conduct in the light of that knowledge. For individuals and for nations the knowledge and practice of the moral standard is progressive.

It is twofold.

For individuals and for nations moral progress takes place in two ways :—

(a) Progress in practice of right

(a) In the first place, men commonly know much that is right and yet leave it undone. A great deal of moral progress consists in training the will to do what conscience clearly shows to be our duty.

(b) Progress in knowledge of right.

(b) In the second place, by reflecting on the nature of right conduct, and on their past life and history, men may attain to higher ideals of right action than they had at first. In this way they make progress in the knowledge of right and wrong. As a rule, progress in the

knowledge of what is right depends upon progress in the practice of what is right.

In society, we constantly see these two sorts of moral progress going on. In every healthy state the government and public opinion, too, are constantly trying to improve the outward form of conduct, so as to bring it into closer conformity with what they know to be right. With this view new laws are constantly being passed, and new customs introduced. Thus there is progress in the practice of right.

But within the state there is the church, and there are numbers of social reformers. These men seek to go beyond their society and the accepted rules of morality. They have come to recognise a higher standard of morality which they seek to teach their fellowmen. By these various agencies moral progress is assisted, and by their means there arises a progress in the knowledge of right.

CHAPTER XIII.

SIN.

§ 133. *The Nature of Sin.*

The view that sin is merely a natural evil would abolish morality altogether.

IF moral progress is an undoubted fact in human life, moral failure is a fact no less common and important. And when we come to look into this fact of moral failure, we become aware of the presence of a disturbing element in the moral life which we call sin or moral evil. The existence of sin needs no proof. It is a fact universally recognised, being as it is universally present in human life. But there have been many different explanations as to what sin is.

(1) It is sometimes maintained that sin is merely a natural evil, a defect in the natural order of things. This view is the logical outcome of any philosophy which ignores the distinction between the moral and the physical, of any philosophy which is either implicitly or explicitly materialistic. The modern materialistic positivism, for instance, represents goodness and badness in man as simply the product of natural forces, the good man and the bad man being what they are inevitably and invariably. Nor does the upholder of this view shrink from accepting its logical consequences, that evil is without remedy, and that there is no such thing as moral

responsibility. "Nothing is gained," says Mr. Cotter Morison, "by disguising the fact that there is no remedy for a bad heart and no substitute for a good one," and, again, "it will perhaps be said that this view does away with moral responsibility . . . to which the answer is that the sooner the idea of moral responsibility is got rid of the better it will be for society and moral education."¹

Of such a view it may be remarked that it opposes some of the most deeply rooted feelings and ideas of human consciousness. On such a view morality and immorality are alike impossible. If such be the case, it seems hardly necessary to submit it to any detailed criticism.

(2) It is also maintained by some writers as, for example, by Spinoza, who carries Descartes on to a consistent conclusion, that sin is merely failure to achieve ideal perfection, and is a necessary correlate of man's finite nature, springing from its inevitable weakness, and being an expression and symptom of man's place among created beings.

The view that sin is merely a failure in goodness attached necessarily to a finite being.

A theory of this kind is not consistent with the most rudimentary idea of sin. Sin is not merely the privation but the contradiction of good. "Evil and good are not, so to put it, upon the same line of advance,

is open to the objection that sin is the contradiction and not merely the privation of good.

¹ Cotter Morison: *The Service of Man*, pp. 295, 293.

The view that sin is a natural defect was also maintained by the Manicheans, who held that the world is the result of the antagonism of two principles, or two gods,—one good and the other evil,—and by the Platonists and other Gnostics, who regarded the world as the product of a good God working upon untractable material. Both theories have survived in certain modern tendencies of thought, and the latter was approved of by J. S. Mill. But they do not demand separate enumeration or treatment. So far as their ethical drift goes, they are adequately represented by the modern materialism instanced in the text.

with only this difference, that while goodness is success, evil is failure. If, for instance, I tell a very deliberate lie, with a view to getting possession of a sum of money by doing so, I surely do something more than fail to reach an ideal of perfect truthfulness. I move deliberately in an opposite direction to that of truth; I do not come short of it; I contradict and trample it under foot."¹ To stand on a wrong line is very different from standing at the commencement of a right one. The former means digression, the latter leaves room for possible progression.

Sin is a conscious moving away from goodness and has its seat in the will.

(3) We seem thus justified in maintaining that sin is a moral and not a natural fact, that it has its source in the will of man, and that it is a contradiction of goodness, and not merely its imperfection. We may say, then, that sin is a conscious moving away from goodness, and a conscious putting out of the energies in the opposite direction. The nature of sin will be more clearly seen if we point out its leading characteristics.

§ 134. *Characteristics of Sin.*

Sin is by its nature

(1) Lawlessness.

(1) Sin in its essence is *lawlessness*, the misuse of good by a rebellion of the will. It is not a new energy but a misuse, a disorder. We have already seen that the life of a true person is a life of obedience to law to which man subjects himself, a life in which there is a due subordination of impulses to the ideal of the higher self of personality. Where such obedience to law and such subordination of the lower to the higher is lacking, there we have sin.

(2) Not in things, but in the will.

(2) Thus it follows that sin is *not in things* but consists in the direction of *will*. And hence we may maintain "that sin has no substance; that there is no

¹ Liddon: *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 139.

positively sinful nature; that sin lies not in things but in our relation to things; that the introduction of sin is simply the privation of order; that moral recovery waits for nothing but the conversion of will."¹

(3) From another point of view we may say that sin ^{(3) Selfishness.} is characterised by *selfishness*. It has already been pointed out that the life of a true person involves self-sacrifice, that it implies and demands that the lower self of individuality should be sacrificed by absorption into the higher self of personality. It would follow naturally, that sin would be characterised by the opposite process; that in sin the abiding interest of the higher self are subordinated to lower impulses and desires; and that the life of sin is thus essentially a life of selfishness.

(4) Sin is *only possible to persons*. In no other depart- ^{(4) Possible only to persons.} ment of life could lawlessness be possible, because in no other department of life is the co-operation of a self-determined being required for the carrying out of an ideal which he freely accepts as good for him and as possible of attainment.

The hypothesis or postulate that sin is not in the nature of things, but in the will of conscious persons, points on to the method by which moral recovery may be effected, and finds in this very fact its own justification. The moral life is, as we have said, lived by faith, and so, too, the conversion of the will necessary for moral recovery must come from faith. If we still have faith in the ideal of personality which we have found necessary for moral life that faith will be a point upon which we may rest the lever of will. If this faith be lost, recovery becomes impossible, so long as it is

Moral recovery is to be effected by faith in the ideal of personality,

¹ *Lux Mundi*, p. 530.

retained progress towards the ideal may still be effected.

which we have seen to mean faith in God,

This faith is further seen to be ultimately faith in God. The ideal of personality in which we found it so necessary to believe, claims us with authority because it appears to us as divine, because it is the authority of God to whom in the last resort all obligation is due. Its claim, therefore, is the claim of God, its right to rule our lives is a divine right, its demand upon us is a religious demand, faith in it is faith in God.

and by the bestowal of divine grace.

But moral recovery requires more than merely the human act of faith; it requires also the divine act of grace. In all ages men have found by practical experience that of themselves they could do nothing, that their strongest efforts often failed, and that the power of recovery did not lie within themselves. They have, however, also found a power from without themselves that enters into them and gives them the strength which they desire, and those who have known this power best have called it the grace of God bestowed in answer to human faith.

This view finds its justification in its practical success.

The justification of such a view lies, apart from a *propter* considerations, in its practical success. The view of sin as natural and therefore irremediable necessarily declares that there is no recovery from sin. The view that sin lies in the will, and that moral recovery is by faith, which draws down upon it the grace of God, finds its justification in experience, partly, that is to say, in the results that it actually produces, partly in the larger promise which it opens out beyond the horizon of what we see.

Responsibility for sin must ultimately mean responsibility to God.

§ 136. *Responsibility for Sin.*

The consciousness of sin is inextricably bound together with the feeling of responsibility for sin. When we have

sinned, the fact of moral obligation is brought home to us with painful emphasis. And just as moral obligation is ultimately due to God, so, too, responsibility for sin is ultimately responsibility to God. Thus the conception of sin which we have already described needs to be enlarged and enriched by this new idea. Sin being the breaking of an obligation due to God, is an offence against God. Sin therefore is by its essence irreligious. Apart from religion, no adequate account can be given of responsibility for sin, just as apart from religion, no adequate account could be given of moral obligation.

Sin is thus by its essence irreligious

§ 137 *Sin and Forgiveness*

We are now in a position to understand another idea which lies deep in the moral consciousness of humanity. When we have sinned, and are conscious of having sinned, there immediately rises in our mind the craving for forgiveness. We must not, however, confuse between the desire for forgiveness and the mere desire to escape from punishment. The desire for forgiveness often includes a desire for punishment which shall, perchance, make forgiveness easier to obtain. What then is forgiveness?

The desire for forgiveness

“Forgiveness is not the careless indifference to wrong by which we seek impunity for our own faults. It is not the perfunctory remission of a present penalty which leaves behind unremoved the sense and the contagion of evil. True forgiveness involves two things—a perfect knowledge of the offence, and a perfect restoration of love.”¹ Thus it is seen that the craving for forgiveness is ultimately a craving for divine forgiveness. When we offend against our fellowmen we desire their forgiveness; but, because the conditions of forgiveness are so difficult, we cannot even in such cases be com-

is not a desire to escape punishment

Forgiveness involves a perfect knowledge of the offence, and a perfect restoration of love.

Hence the desire for forgiveness is ultimately a desire for divine forgiveness.

¹ Westcott: *The Historic Faith*, pp.⁸ 130, 131

pletely satisfied with the assurance of human forgiveness. We often feel in these cases that we cannot forgive ourselves, which simply means that we cannot take to ourselves the assurance of forgiveness, except it come from a being who can perfectly understand our sin and our penitence.

Three characteristics of forgiveness:

We may notice three special characteristics of forgiveness:—

(a) It is not 'natural';

(a) Forgiveness is not 'natural'; it has no place in nature. Nature's laws are inexorable. In the natural order of the moral life there is no return of opportunity, no obligation of the past. The deed done remains while the world lasts. The opportunity neglected remains a blank forever.

(b) It cannot be demanded;

(b) Forgiveness is thus a free gift. We cannot claim it from the person we have injured. We cannot demand it from justice. We can only plead for it from graciousness.

(c) It needs to be conveyed in a distinct assurance.

(c) Thus that we may feel the sense of having been forgiven, we need a distinct assurance of forgiveness. There is this peculiarity about the craving for forgiveness: it is never content with an argument as to probabilities, or an argument as to the nature of the person against whom the offence is committed.

§ 138. *The Liberty of Sin.*

Voluntariness of sin a necessary moral postulate.

It is obvious that were we not conscious of being free agents we could feel no sense of moral responsibility, that is to say no sense of sin. Liberty to sin, the voluntariness of sin, is a necessary postulate in all our moral judgments.

But the power of the will may be limited by inherited nature and social surroundings.

It is, however, sometimes said that the power of the will to abstain from wrong-doing is more limited than such a doctrine would admit it to be.

It is urged, for instance, that the influence of our inherited natures, and of the social environment in which we live, is often too powerful for the individual to combat; that his sin cannot therefore rightly be said to be voluntary.

Now it may be admitted at once that there is in this contention a great deal of truth; but the truth amounts to no more than this, that it will often be difficult, and sometimes impossible, to estimate the degree of responsibility of a person found to have sinned, that we cannot always apply to other people the standard of our own experience, and that we cannot always estimate the extent of culpability which attaches to the fault of another. It means in brief that we should be charitable in judging others.

This, however, merely constitutes a demand for charity in our judgments of others.

But it does not follow from this that we are not conscious of responsibility for our own actions or that we should extenuate them by such considerations, as we might apply to others. "For one always knows very well in one's own mind whether one is responsible, and no theory can make you believe that you are not so, when you feel that you really are. On the contrary the discussion of responsibility awakens the feeling of it; and no one can take advantage in his own case of the preceding concessions."¹ Moreover, charity in judging others is logically correlative with severity in judging ourselves, if regard is had to the basis of that charity. "When other men are concerned, we do not, and we never can, know to what extent nature has paralysed the will within them; but, as to ourselves, we never know how far will can overcome nature; and we have no right to set this limit at one point or another. As to other men, we are not responsible for their conduct; and therefore we ought

It in no way weakens the force of our own feeling of responsibility for what we do.

¹ Janet: *Theory of Morals*, p. 446.

to give the fullest weight to extenuating¹ circumstances though showing no favour to the evil in itself, which remains the same, whatever may be the extent of the subjective responsibility of the agent. But, on the contrary, when we ourselves are concerned, for the very reason that we are responsible for our own salvation, we cannot place our aim too high - consequently we cannot limit too strictly our excuses and our irresponsibility."¹

§ 139. *The Idea of Sin leads on to Metaphysical Considerations.*

The idea of sin leads on to metaphysical questions of religion and free will

The brief treatment of sin which we have offered is at any rate sufficient to indicate that the idea of sin is essentially and emphatically religious. It emphasises the truth with which we started that ethics terminates in religion. It brings emphatically before us the doctrine of free will as an ethical postulate, and its demand here is almost painfully intense. It thus reminds us that the task of the moral philosopher is not done until he has at any rate indicated the metaphysical theory upon which ethics rests, or rather what are the metaphysical implications of the ethical theory. In strict order of logic the treatment of these metaphysical implications should have preceded the statement of ethical theory, but this would have been to introduce at the outset the most difficult questions of all. And it has therefore been more convenient to reserve the metaphysical theory till the end, proceeding from the circumference to the centre rather than from the centre to the circumference.

¹ Janet: *Theory of Morals*, p. 447.

CHAPTER XIV.

METAPHYSICAL THEORY OF ETHICS.

§ 140 *Scope of the Metaphysic of Ethics.*

WE have in a previous chapter dealt broadly with the agnostic objection to metaphysics, and it does not fall within the scope of the present volume to deal in detail with the question as to the possibility of the metaphysical theory. As we have said before, the statement of such a theory is the best proof of its possibility.

The metaphysical theory of ethics involves treatment of

The aim of a metaphysic of ethics is to place the facts of human life in relation to the great realities which surround them. But this single problem assumes three aspects: (1) It presents itself to us as the problem of free will, concerned with the essential nature of man; (2) we are then required to place this being in relation to nature, and (3) to ascertain his relation to God. If the first of these problems be solved the solution of the other two is practically found. And a metaphysical theory of ethics must commence with some account of the freedom of the will.

(1) the problem of freedom,
(2) man's relation to nature,

(3) man's relation to God.

A. THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

§ 141. *Statement of the Problem.*

The question as to whether will is free does not at first sight seem to be ambiguous. It has, nevertheless,

Statement of the problem.

been frequently misunderstood and perverted, and it is necessary, therefore, to explain exactly what the problem is. Dr. Martineau states it thus "Whether, in the exercise of will (*i.e.*, in cases of choice), the mind is wholly determined by phenomenal antecedents and external conditions, or, itself also, as active subject of these objective experiences, plays the part of determining cause" ¹ From the scientific point of view, man is merely a part of the totality of things. Nature is characterised by the great law of uniformity; man, therefore, is to be regarded as equally under the law with every other part of nature. Or, again, nature may be regarded as a process of evolution, and evolution is one, is continuous, and man as occupying a place in this evolution is regarded as the result of certain forces. Now the question is whether we are to accept this as an adequate explanation of human life, necessarily excluding the disturbing element of freedom, or whether we are to admit as valid the claims of the moral and religious consciousness of man, carrying with them as they do the assertion of freedom as the postulate of morality and religion.

A second mode of stating the problem assumes that the mind is not wholly determined by phenomenal antecedents, but would ask whether it is, or is not, wholly determined by internal conditions, such, for example, as its actual character at any given moment; and whether if it be so determined it can be said to be free, since its development must proceed on lines already fixed and settled. • •

There are two points which must be carefully noted: .

(1) Free will does not mean a motiveless will or a limitless will. To make this point clear the word

¹ Martineau: *Study of Religion*, vol. II. p. 188.

'self-determination' is used instead of 'free will' and, rightly understood, is simply "a more accurately descriptive name for what is commonly called free will: and its accent, so to speak, is upon the 'self.' But various necessitarians have caught it up and changed its accent on to the 'determination.' Self-determination, they say, means the fact of being determined by self, used as a synonym for character; and is thus only a particular form of determinism; human conduct being as necessarily determined by character as material motion by external force."¹ This usage, however, is a perversion of the word to a sense which it was never intended to bear by those who introduced it.

(2) But it is this perversion which gives rise to the bifurcation of the problem noticed above, and we have to see whether, on the one hand, the human will is free with regard to external restraints and influences, and, on the other hand, whether it possesses the power of acting freely with regard to the bent or settled tendency of character.

§ 142. *The Determinist Solution.*

The determinist maintains the first branch of the alternative offered above, and supports his contention by a cumulative argument of considerable force. He argues (1) that the belief that events are determinedly related to the state of things immediately preceding them, is firmly established with regard to every other department of fact except human relations; (2) that a large part of human action is admittedly determined by physical causes and external stimuli, and that no clear line can be drawn between acts of this kind and those which are conscious and voluntary; (3) "we always

The determinist argument is supported:

(1) by the analogy of other departments of fact;

(2) by the consideration of human activity externally conditioned;

(3) by the fact that we predict on this principle the actions of others;

¹ Illingworth: *Divine Immanence*, p. 193.

(4) and regard
our own future
as similarly
determined;

(5) by the con-
sideration that
as regards the
limits of our own
will power the
libertarian con-
ception is admit-
tedly largely
illusory.

explain the voluntary action of all men except ourselves on the principle of causation by character and circumstances. . . . We infer generally the future actions of those whom we know from their past actions; and if our forecast turns out in any case to be erroneous, we do not attribute the discrepancy to the disturbing influence of free will, but to our incomplete acquaintance with their character and motives;"¹ (4) that even as regards our own actions, we survey our volitional choice in the series of our choices, and explain it as an effect of our nature, education, and circumstances. "Nay, we even apply the same conceptions to our future action, and the more, in proportion as our moral sentiments are developed: for with our sense of duty generally increases our sense of the duty of moral culture and our desire of self-improvement, and the possibility of moral self-culture depends on the assumption that by a present volition we can determine to some extent our action in the more or less remote future;"² (5) that, although it is true that we habitually take the libertarian view as to our future, yet this belief is universally admitted to be to a great extent illusory and misleading. And that both libertarian and determinist would agree in teaching "that it is much less easy than men commonly imagine to break the subtle unfelt trammels of habit."³

§ 143 *The Libertarian Solution.*

Freedom of the
will does not
mean ability to
act without a
motive.

In answer to the determinist, the libertarian would point out what we have already noticed, that by the freedom of will he does not mean the ability to act without a motive, but "the ability to create or co-

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

² *Ib.*, p. 65.

³ *Ib.*, p. 66.

operate in creating our own motives, or to choose our motive, or to transform a weaker motive into a stronger by adding weights to the scale of our own accord, and thus to determine our conduct by our reason."¹ In support of his contention, that in this sense the will is free, he would argue somewhat as follows:—

It is supported by the following considerations:

(1) That "in the first place, one must recall the fact that freewill is defended on grounds of experience, and denied on grounds of antecedent improbability. As Dr. Johnson once put it when irritated with the argument, 'all theory is against freewill, but all experience is in its favour.' This is important to notice, because it is the exact converse of what is often supposed to be the case. . . . The consciousness of freedom is a fact of practically universal experience; not of reported experience in the past, but of present and past experience alike. While its opponents ground their opposition, not upon a refutation of the fact, nor even upon its inconsistency with other facts; but upon its inconsistency with a theory which they have drawn from other facts, and can only so draw by previously ruling the fact in question out of court. In other words, they beg the question, and offer presumption instead of proof."² The argument against freewill is really an *a priori* argument, which declares freewill to be inconsistent with various natural analogies or theoretic presumptions. It is not in its origin an induction from observed facts of human life, but is a theory presupposed on the analogy of purely physical sciences. The conclusion precedes the proof, and the argument urged by scientific prepossession is in reality radically unscientific.

(1) Free will is defended on grounds of experience and denied *a priori*.

¹ Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 33.

² Illingworth: *Divine Immanence*, pp. 190, 191.

(2) Free will is a fact of immediate and universal consciousness

(2) That free will is not only defended, but rightly defended on grounds of experience, inasmuch as it is a fact of immediate and universal consciousness. Professor Sidgwick puts the matter thus: "Certainly when I have a distinct consciousness of choosing between alternatives of conduct one of which I conceive as right or reasonable, I find it impossible not to think that I can now choose to do what I so conceive, supposing that there is no obstacle to my doing it except absence of adequate motive, however strong may be my inclination to act unreasonably, and however uniformly I may have yielded to such inclinations in the past. I recognise that each concession to vicious desire makes the difficulty of resisting it greater when the desire recurs, but the difficulty always seems to remain separated by an impassable gulf from impossibility. I do not deny that this conviction may be illusory: that if I knew my own nature I might see it to be predetermined that being so constituted and in such circumstances, I should act on the occasion in question contrary to my rational judgment. But I cannot conceive myself seeing this, without at the same time conceiving my whole conception of what I now call my action fundamentally altered. I cannot conceive that if I contemplated the actions of my organism in this light I should refer them to my self, *i.e.*, to the mind so contemplating—in the sense in which I now refer them."¹

(3) It is an essential part of my consciousness.

(3) That, further, it is impossible to regard this belief as illusory, for the belief in free will is not merely, as Professor Bain maintains, a fact of consciousness as long as it is believed. It is an immediate part of my consciousness. I cannot conceive myself without it. If, therefore, it is a delusion, there is no other fact of con-

¹ Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 68.

sciousness which is not equally illusory. The assumption that our consciousness on this point is illusory involves us in complete agnosticism with regard to all facts of consciousness in their relation to reality. The consciousness of free will can only be treated as an illusory conviction, by being shown to conflict with the facts of human life.

(4) That freedom does not conflict with the fact that man is in many ways limited. In human activity there is doubtless much that is determined for man. "Certain lines are laid down for each man, in his inner nature and outward circumstances, along which to develop a character. A man has not the universal field of possibilities to himself; each has his own moral sphere. This is determined for him, it is the given element in his life."¹ But room is still left for freedom unless, out of these two factors—the internal and the external—the moral nature of man can be constructed. Man may be 'given' his sphere, he may be 'given' his particular moral task, but within this sphere there may still lie the moral alternative. And this is evident from a consideration of the limitations which condition free will on every side. Man is *physically limited*. He cannot create physical energy. He cannot alter the material order. Then again he is *constitutionally limited* in the sphere of character. His will cannot create a new character, but can only fashion those rudiments of character which he possesses. Once more, he is *morally limited*. Acts form habits; habits grow upon us; and thus our character is permanently formed. Thus our free will is limited in a variety of ways. "But as a matter of fact neither the physical nor the constitutional limits above mentioned, affect its essence; they merely circumscribe its ranges. It is only

(4) The 'determined' element in man's life does not exclude possibility of freedom.

¹ James Seth: *A Study of Ethical Principles*, p. 370.

the moral limitation that really affects it, and that is its own creation, for the habits that enslave it were at first the objects of its choice; and thus, however much a man's character determines him, he is always and rightly held responsible for the result."¹

(5) It finds a progressive self-justification in morality.

(5) That, moreover, the belief in free will finds a progressive justification in morality. It abundantly justifies its legitimacy by the progressive development of morality in which it remits.

(6) The determinist's doctrine leaves no room for personality.

(6) That the determinist doctrine is based upon an inadequate conception of the self, and allows no room for personality. The final question thus arises as to whether we can accept the determinist assumption regarding the nature of the self.

§ 144. *The Problem of Freedom is the Problem of Personality.*

Determinism based on an empirical notion of the self. Can such a notion be accepted as adequate?

The theory of determinism involves an empirical notion of the self and indeed, in its modern form, is based upon a sensational philosophy. If it be true that the self is merely a sum total or aggregate of feelings, impulses, etc., if, that is to say, its existence is entirely phenomenal, then doubtless the case for freedom is lost. But can we accept such a view of the nature of the self?

The transcendental idea of a personal self is necessary to account for knowledge and volition at all.

What is the meaning of states of consciousness for me except that they are the states of *my* consciousness? A thought without a thinker, sensation without a self, are surely impossible conceptions. Hume's argument is that he "never caught himself without a perception," and that thus the only self he knew was a sensational self. But "a knowledge of sequent states is only possible when each is accompanied by the 'I think' of an

¹ Illingworth: *Divine Immanence*, p. 209.

identical apperception. Or, as it has been otherwise expressed, there is all the difference in the world between succession and consciousness of succession, between change and consciousness of change. Mere change or mere succession, if such a thing were possible, would be, as Kant points out, first A, then B, then C, each filling out existence for the time being, and constituting its sum, then vanishing tracelessly to give place to its successor—to a successor which yet would not be a successor, seeing that no record of its predecessor would remain. The change, the succession, the series, can only be known to a consciousness or subject which is not identical with any one member of the series, but is present equally to every member and identical with itself throughout. Connection or relatedness of any sort—even Hume's association—is possible only through the presence of such a unity to each term of the relation. Hence, while it is quite true, as Hume said, that when we enter into what we call ourselves we cannot point to any particular perception of self as we can point to particular perception of heat or cold, love or hatred, it is as undoubted that the very condition of all these particular perceptions, given along with each of them and essential to the connecting of one with another, is precisely the self or subject which Hume could not find—which he could not find because he looked for it not in its proper character as the subject or correlate of all perceptions or objects, but as itself, in some fashion, a perception or object added to the other contents of consciousness."¹ And when we pass from the intellectual to the volitional life the impossibility of a purely empirical notion of the self becomes still more obvious. We seem therefore justified in maintaining that the

¹ Andrew Seth: *Hegelianism and Personality*, pp. 11, 12.

transcendental idea of a personal self is a necessary complement of the psychological view. The latter is true so far as it goes, but to rest in it as ultimate is to be satisfied with a superficial view when a deeper one is necessary. Thus we return to the idea which we have already repeatedly emphasised, that the only adequate ethical view of man is the personal view. And it is this belief that the freedom of the will is a true and a necessary belief.¹

§ 145. *Free will a necessary Ethical Postulate*

In what sense is free will a necessary ethical postulate?

Determinism, it may be admitted, can find room for morality.

But it will be morality, with out its inward meaning.

It is sometimes contended that determinism admits of no morality, while, on the other hand, Professor Sidgwick maintains that the question of free will need not perceptibly affect an ethical system. Both opinions need modification. We may admit that in a determinist's constitution of things scope will be left for the right education of habits, and reformation and control of character, and the protection of social life. "If it is said that, on this theory, we shall be punishing the criminal for what he cannot help, the answer is ready, 'We punish him in order that he may help it, and in order that others too, under like temptation, may rightly reckon both sides of the account.'² But the whole inward meaning and interpretation of the moral law is essentially different from that given to it by the ethics

¹ It may be remarked that one form of transcendental philosophy terminates in a determinism as absolute as that of the empiricists. The Hegelian identification of the self with the character and still more the Hegelian doctrine of Pantheism both lead us back to determinism. They do so because they both depersonalise man. See Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Bk. II. c. 1., esp pp. 112 and 113, and *Works*, Vol. II. pp. 315-320. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 114-120.

² Martineau: *Study of Religion*, vol. II. p. 234.

of free will. The moral law becomes prudential; remorse can find no place; reverence has no object. The outward form of morality is preserved, but its whole inward content, the motive to it, the ideal it represents, are entirely lost. "The language of Ethics, then, when translated into necessarian formulas, parts with all conceptions distinctly moral, and becomes simply descriptive of phenomena in natural history. It tells us what has been, what is, what probably will be; but not (unless in an altered sense) what ought to be. Responsibility, obligation, merit, guilt, remorse, forgiveness, justice, drop from its vocabulary or remain there only to mislead."¹ This may be well illustrated by J. S. Mill's account of moral responsibility. "We are supposed capable of understanding that other people have rights, and all that follows from this. The mind which possesses this idea, if capable of placing itself at the point of view of another person, must recognise it as not unjust that others should protect themselves against any disposition on his part to infringe their rights; and he will do so the more readily, because he also has rights, and his rights continually require the same protection. This, I maintain, is our feeling of accountability, in so far as it can be separated from the associations engendered by the prospect of being actually called to account."²

And all the conceptions of morality as ordinarily understood and named will need alteration.

A determinist theory may thus avail for the production of actions which shall be useful, and which shall tend to promote the social well-being, but it is absolutely empty of any content properly moral, and it may, therefore, be maintained with entire truth that the

¹ Martineau: *Study of Religion*, vol. II. p. 300.

² J. S. Mill: *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 525.

freedom of the will is a necessary postulate of morality, and that "either free-will is a fact or moral judgment a delusion."¹

§ 146. MAN AND NATURE.

* The dualism between man and nature has been treated

The dualism between man and nature is a philosophical commonplace. The solution of the problem it affords as to man's relation to nature has been attempted in three ways:—

(1) On naturalistic principles,

(1) The naturalistic solution attempts to explain man as merely a link in a chain of natural evolution. The moral life is explained in terms of mechanism. The ethical process is regarded as correlative with the physical, and is merely viewed as a later stage of Cosmical development. Mr. Spencer asks "if the ethical man is not a product of the Cosmic process, what is he the product of?"

(2) On agnostic principles.

(2) Professor Huxley writing on evolution and ethics, maintains that no explanation is possible. He starts with the question as to "whether there is or is not a sanction for morality in the ways of the Cosmos," and

¹ Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. II. p. 41. See Seth, *Study*, etc., pp. 362 ff.

In dealing with the question of free-will we have made no mention of cruder necessarian theories, or of the religious doctrines of fatalism or predestination. They present no difficulties to the libertarian which are not put far more ably and trenchantly by the philosophic determinism of modern writers. The theological question involved in the doctrines of fatalism and predestination does not come within the scope of the present volume. Neither have we thought it necessary to include a treatment of Kant's theory of freedom. That it is an abstract theory may be inferred from the account of Kant's ethics previously given, and, as such, it is open to objections of the same nature as were urged in previous chapters against other portions of his ethical theory.

he finds that "Cosmic nature is no school of virtue but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature," that "the Cosmos works through the lower nature of man, not for righteousness but against it." And he declares that the ethical process consists in combating the Cosmic process at every step. Thus Professor Huxley's attitude is that of Agnosticism. Morality is, in his view, inexplicable, being incapable of physical explanation, which is the only kind of explanation he would admit.*

(3) The unsatisfactory nature of these solutions, the first of which proceeds by suppressing one term in the relation, while the other refuses to correlate them at all, naturally leads us to ask for a principle which shall reconcile man and nature and reduce them to a deeper unity. Hence arises the solution of Divine Providence. Man is in, but not of, nature. His moral life postulates a higher sphere than nature. Both man and nature are under the providence of God: nature thus affords the instrument for man's moral probation, the means of an ethical discipline. The problem of man and nature thus finds its solution in the ultimate metaphysical problem—the problem of God.

(3) By unifying both as parts in a scheme of Divine Providence.

THE PROBLEM OF GOD.

§ 147. *Limits of the Problem.*

We are not concerned with this problem in its varied theological aspects. The task before us is the more limited task of ascertaining how far and in what way the idea of God is a metaphysical implication of ethical theory.

* Huxley: *Evolution and Ethics*.

§ 148. *The Idea of God as implied in Ethical Theory.*

Kant's deduction of the idea of God from the equation between goodness and happiness.

(1) Kant argued* that the life of goodness ought to be, and therefore ultimately will be, one of happiness. From this fact he deduces an argument for the existence of God as moral Governor of the Universe. The final equation of virtue and happiness is, according to Kant, an ethical postulate. Now it is manifest that under present circumstances the equation does not exist, and that therefore a theological hypothesis is necessary to fill up the gap.

This argument is subsidiary but inadequate and involves too external a notion of God.

Such an argument does not, however, seem to be an adequate statement of the idea of God as implied in ethical theory. The argument seems just and reasonable as a subsidiary argument, but to rest in it as an adequate statement of the grounds on which man's life demands belief in God, is to be content with a view of God somewhat too external, and to be satisfied with aspirations lower than the highest of which man is capable.

We are rather led to believe in God by considering the source and the warrant of the moral ideal.

(2) It seems truer to say that we are led to believe in God as an implication of ethical theory rather by considering the source and the warrant of the moral ideal.¹ The moral ideal is no mere dream of future possibility, no mere "self-painting of the yearning spirit." Its power in the life of man testifies that it is a faith in everlasting realities, and the secret of its power lies in the conviction it carries with it, that it is the expression of the supreme reality. We have already seen how the fact of moral obligation leads us to the idea of God to whom obligation is due, and that it is due to Him because he is the perfect person concentrating in Himself all goodness, the supreme goodness, the supreme reality. If we stop short of this conclusion

¹ See Martineau, *Study of Religion*, vol. I. Introduction, § 2.

morality remains inexplicable, and its ideals must be abandoned as a beautiful but mistaken illusion. Thus it seems true to say that short of the idea of God there is no scope for self-realisation, no adequate sphere for the exercise of virtue.

In this solution the problem of nature finds its explanation. For from it there follows the conclusion that there is "a moral order somehow pervading and using (in however strange and unexpected wise) the order of nature, and thus making possible for the moral being the fulfilment of his moral task, the perfect realisation of all his moral capacities. That the universe is not foreign to the ethical spirit of man, or indifferent to it, but its sphere and atmosphere, the soil of its life, the breath of its being; that 'the soul of the world is just, that might is ultimately right, and the divine and universal Power, a Power that makes for righteousness; that so far from the nature of things being antagonistic to morality, 'morality is the nature of things.'"¹ Thus, both by considering the order of nature and by considering the ultimate significance of morality itself, we arrive at the idea of God, which we seem justified therefore in calling the metaphysical implication of morality as we know it.

In this solution the problem of nature finds its answer.

§ 149. *The Nature of God.*

Without entering upon a lengthy theological argument we may at any rate say that the argument already given requires belief in a personal God. If the moral ideal is an ideal of personality, the moral reality must be the perfection of personality. This is a point which cannot be too strongly emphasised—a conviction which cannot be too earnestly held.

Ethical theory involves belief in a personal God.

¹James Seth: *A Study of Ethical Principles*, p. 422.

The Anthropomorphic objection against the conception of God as personal may be met by pointing out

- (1) that we must think of God under the highest category within our reach ;
 (2) that subjectivity must be an essential element in the conception ;

- (3) that the conception does not imply that God is merely a "larger man."

The objection is made that to conceive of God as personal is to conceive of Him as an Anthropomorphic Deity. To this it may be replied that the highest form of being which we know is personality, and that we must interpret the life of God by means of the highest category within our reach. If there is anything higher than personality, then, doubtless, the life of God will be a life of that higher nature, but we, at any rate, know of nothing and can conceive of nothing higher. It might further be pointed out that if we are to keep the name of God at all, subjectivity is an essential element in the conception. If we conceive of God, it is *we* who have the conception, and the conception must therefore be a human conception. To declare it *ipso facto* false, is to impugn the validity of all knowledge simply on the ground that it is knowledge.

This, however, does not mean that God is merely "a larger man." "Just as the man has a centre of his own which we cannot occupy, and from which he looks, as it were, upon the inner side of his acts and words (as well as upon a private world of thoughts and feelings, many of which do not take shape in the common or general world at all), so, if we speak to God at all, there must be a divine centre of thought, activity, and enjoyment, to which no mortal can penetrate. In this sense every man's being is different for himself from what it is as exhibited to others, and God's Being may infinitely transcend His manifestations as known by us."¹

The objection that personality contradicts infinity, rests upon a confusion of personality with individuality.

It is further objected that to conceive God as a person is to contradict His infinity. "For me," says Mr. Bradley, "a person is finite or is meaningless." This

¹ Andrew Seth : *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 223.

This argument has reference to natural as opposed to revealed religion.

objection rests upon a confusion of personality with individuality. The individual is essentially finite, the person is essentially infinite, and thus Lotze maintains that "perfect personality is in God alone." The human personality is a great mystery to itself. There often arise questions as to what we are, what our soul is, what its life really means, which we can never completely answer or entirely silence. "The fact that these questions can arise shows how far personality is from being developed in us to the extent which its notion admits and requires. It can be perfect only in the infinite Being which, in surveying all its conditions or actions, never finds any content of that which it suffers or any law of its working, the meaning and origin of which are not transparently plain to it, and capable of being explained by reference to its own nature."¹

If, then, God is a person, He will possess the essential characteristics of personality :

- (1) He will be self-conscious, and this consciousness is, be it remembered, the self-consciousness of a being who is the perfect person, the supreme goodness, the highest reality.
- (2) He will manifest Himself in activity.
- (3) He will love with the infinite love of a perfect person—and man, too, will be included within the sphere of this infinite love.

It is thus that man finds in God not only the moral ideal and the perfect reality, but also, through faith in Him, and through the gracious response to that faith, the strength and the power to progress towards that ideal even if it be but a little way.

¹Lotze, *Microcosmus*, ix. § 4. On the Anthropomorphic Objection, see Illingworth, *Personality Human and Divine*, pp. 25, 26 and notes. Martineau : *Study of Religion*, vol. I. pp. 313 foll.

§ 150. *Conclusion.*

Concluding
remarks.

We have now traced the development of an ethical theory from its basis in psychology to its termination in metaphysics and religion. We have seen how the notions of right, of duty, and of good lead us to the conception that the end of life for man is to work out into realisation the potentialities of his personal being, that his true end, and therefore his true happiness, consists in being a person and in loving and respecting other persons. We have also seen how the end of man's personality can only be reached by his endeavour to approach to the life of God, the Perfect Person Who is the moral perfection which gives man his moral ideal. Thus we reach the conclusion that moral life is the religious life,—the life of conformity to the life of God Who, by virtue of His perfect personality, is the Eternal Law of Righteousness to all persons; to Whom, seeing that He loves us, we owe the duties of the moral life; and from Whom we may obtain the strength and power to fulfil those duties.

APPENDIX.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

GENERAL

ARISTOTLE : *Ethics*.

GREEN : *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

MARTINEAU : *Types of Ethical Theory*, especially Vol II.

SIDGWICK¹ : *Methods of Ethics*.

SIDGWICK : *History of Ethics*.

KANT'S ETHICAL WRITINGS : As edited in Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics*.

JAMES SETH : *A Study of Ethical Principles*

CALDERWOOD² : *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*.

FOR UTILITARIANISM

J. S. MILL : *Utilitarianism*.

GIZYCKI and COIT : *Student's Manual of Ethical Philosophy*.

Also Professor Sidgwick's works named above.

FOR EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS.

SPENCER : *The Data of Ethics*.

STEPHEN : *Science of Ethics*.

ALEXANDER : *Moral Order and Progress*.

CHAPTER I.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF ETHICAL STUDIES

JAMES SETH : *Study of Ethical Principles*, Introduction, c. i.

MARTINEAU : *Types of Ethical Theory*, Part II., Introduction, and Bk. I. c. 1.

¹ We quote the 4th Ed.

² We quote the edition of 1888.

MUIRHEAD: *Elements of Ethics*, Bk. I.

SIDGWICK: *Methods of Ethics*, Bk. I. cc. i. and ii.

CHAPTER II.

METHODS OF ETHICS

SETH: *Study, etc.*, Introduction, c. ii. and Introductory Chapter of Part III

SIDGWICK: *Methods, etc.*, Bk. I. cc. i. and vi

CHAPTER III

VOLUNTARY ACTION.

JAMES: *Principles of Psychology*, c. xxvi.

HOFFDING: *Outlines of Psychology* (Eng. tr.), c. vii.

MUIRHEAD: *Elements, etc.*, Bk. II. c. i.

ARISTOTLE: *Ethics*, Bk. III.

CHAPTER IV

MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

MARTINEAU: *Types, etc.*, Part II. Bk. I. c. i.

SIDGWICK: *Methods, etc.*, Bk. I. c. iii.

CALDERWOOD: *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, Part I.

OBJECT OF MORAL JUDGMENT.

MARTINEAU: As above.

MUIRHEAD: *Elements, etc.*, Bk. II. c. i.

KANT: *Metaphysic of Morals*, I and II

MORAL FACULTY

KANT: As above.

MARTINEAU: As above, and Part II., Introduction.

SIDGWICK: *Methods, etc.*, Bk. I. c. iii.

STEWART: *Active and Moral Powers*, Bk. II. c. v.

BUTLER: *Sermons*, i. ii. and iii.

BUTLER: *Dissertation on Virtue*.

CALDERWOOD: *Handbook, etc.*, Part I.

MORAL SENTIMENTS.

HOFFDING: *Outlines, etc.*, pp. 259 foll.

MARTINEAU: *Types, etc.*, Vol. II. pp. 91, 151-163.

CALDERWOOD: *Handbook, etc.*, Part IV. See also corresponding chapter in editions previous to 1888.

CHAPTER V.

STANDARD OF THE MORAL JUDGMENT.

- SETH . *Study, etc.*, Part I. cc. ii. and iii.
 MARTINEAU : *Types, etc.*, Part II. Bk. II. c. i
 REID : *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind*, V
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